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Rose Bowl All-American

C. Paul Jackson

THOMAS Y. CROWELL COMPANY
New York

By the Author:

*Rose Bowl All-American
Little Leaguer's First Uniform
Spice's Football
How to Play Better Baseball*

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TO ORPHA, MY WIFE,
AND MEMORIES OF OUR TRIP
TO THE COAST IN THAT BIG OLD CAR.

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Rose Bowl All-American

I

Dick Thornley, Varsity Fullback

DICK THORNLEY was sitting on the bench in the Michigan dressing room beneath the Stadium. He could hear the dull rumble of people overhead as early comers streamed into the great Bowl. He leaned over to lace his football shoes, absently dropped a lace, and wiped the palm of his hand along the side of the shiny, spotless, corn-yellow game pants. He stared oddly at the hand. Golly! A fellow shouldn't be breaking out in a cold sweat like that.

"Hey, where the heck are my clean sweat socks! And how about one of you manager potentates digging up a clean undershirt?"

A tall young man grinned down at Dick. His blue eyes were friendly.

"Gotta keep these manager guys on their toes," Barry Shane said. He sat down beside Dick. He ran a hand through reddish-gold hair. Shane's hair was even more wavy than Dick's brown mop. Shane asked, "How do you feel?"

Dick wiped his hand along his pants again, swallowed painfully. He attempted a grin, and his face felt stiff. He croaked, "Swell!"

Barry Shane nodded, dropped a hand on Dick's knee.

"I know what you mean," he said. "Butterflies fluttering around in a great void that used to be your stomach. Most everybody feels like that before he starts his first varsity game. It's a good sign, shows you're on edge."

Dick looked up quickly, started to deny that he felt all empty inside. Above all things he did not want his teammates to suspect that he was anything but full of confidence. Doggone it, he *was* confident. Things were going to be all right. Sure, sure, who are you kidding, Thornley? Before Dick could say anything to Shane an assistant manager handed the varsity tackle star the sweat socks and undershirt he had demanded. Shane took them, whacked Dick on the thigh as he rose.

"Hang in there," Shane said. "We all go through it the first game. You'll be all right."

Then Shane turned and scowled at a husky, dark-haired boy who had walked past Dick and Barry three times in less than that many minutes.

"For Pete's sake, sit down or stand still for five seconds in a row, will you, R. E.?" Shane said. "You'd give anybody the jitters!"

R. E. Lee looked calmly at Shane. "Why don't you be calm like me?" he asked placidly. He resumed his pacing.

Dick's gaze followed the big, quiet-spoken varsity center. R. E. was facing his first game as regular center. R. E. did not appear to be worried. But Dick Thornley was.

R. E. turned suddenly and came back in front of Dick.

"Don't let Shane get you excited," the big center advised. "Take it cool, son, take it cool, I say."

He wandered on, pulling on various items of his equipment as he roamed about the room.

". . . This guy Ware is little, but he's one of the best

backs State has ever had. . . . Yeah, and State has had some plenty good backs. . . . 'Ja read Flash Flager's stuff in this morning's paper? That joker writes what he thinks, doesn't he? . . . Hey, where the dickens are my shoulder pads! . . ."

The dressing room hum beat against Dick's ears, but the comments and cracks did not consciously register. *Snap out of it*, he told himself. *You're all set. Steve Foster practically advertised that you're starting, and the headcoach should know, shouldn't he?*

". . . Yeah, Flager came right out and put it on the line that Michigan was starting today on the Rose Bowl trail. . . ."

Flash Flager's sportsheet column had also bluntly stated that a big share of Michigan's chances for a good season depended on Headcoach Steve Foster's ability to develop backfield depth. The words of the sports writer's pre-game column were vivid in Dick's memory.

. . . Especially at fullback. Old reliable Mike Flaherty is still around for the fullback slot, but this writer suspects that Steve Foster plans for Flaherty to bulwark the line as a defensive backer-up and maybe serve as offensive center if R. E. Lee fails to measure up to Western Conference caliber. Also, there is the matter of a trick shoulder that could plague Flaherty.

Next in line for the key fullback spot is Dick Thornley, and herein rests the big question mark of Michigan's backfield. Bart Jensen, also a Sophomore, appears to fit solidly in the wingback position; Pete Byrne will come into his own as quarterback; and Earl Crowe should be better than ever at the other halfback. Which brings us right back to Dick Thornley.

Six feet tall, fast, and a rugged one-ninety-five pounds, Thornley has the physical attributes of a Michigan full-

back, but—well, time will tell whether Dick realizes his potentialities. By nightfall some of it may be told. Cagey Steve Foster refuses to commit himself, but our guess is that Thornley will start at fullback today against Michigan State. . . .

Yes, Steve Foster had run him at fullback in the final workout, and that was about as close as Michigan's head-coach ever came to stating definitely that any given man had a job cinched. But—yes, *but!* That was the trouble. A fellow couldn't quite forget that there was a big "but" involved.

Dick eyed a player who sat on a bench along the opposite row of lockers. Bart Jensen personified all his grief. Look at him! It was a cinch that Bart Jensen had no qualms. Dog-goned if he didn't seem to swagger even sitting down! But then, Bart Jensen was sure of himself.

Dick Thornley had once been sure of himself, too. Why in thunder couldn't he be more like Jensen? Like *Jensen!* Huh! The big stupe!

Dick's thoughts were going over the same old painful treadmill. They reached back over a long period of time. Perhaps even farther back than the scene at football practice during his junior year at University High three years before. The swaggering defiance of Bart Jensen that day was still vivid in Dick's memory.

"Yeah, I'm kicked off the squad," Jensen had said. "Big stuffed-shirt coach told me I'd have to bring up my geometry mark or I'd be ineligible. Hah! I told him a few facts so I'm insubordinate. Well, it's okay with me. I'm quitting U High!"

"You can't do that. You'll lose a year's eligibility for football!" Dick had said. "Don't be a stupe!"

"Hah! Stupe, is it! Everybody but Big Stuff Thornley is a stupe! So I'll lose a year's football eligibility, so what? I'll enroll at Ann Arbor High, where there won't be any tuition to pay and where things are really democratic. I won't be able to play varsity football for a year, but the coach over there will give me a fair shake, and I can work out during practice. A guy gets along under his own power in a public school!"

Dick had been puzzled. It was easy to see that Jensen was angry at him, blaming him.

"I don't get it," Dick had said. "You sound as though you're taking a slap at me for something."

"Hah! Don't ever think different, Thornley! Nobody kicked about any of my classwork until I'd beat you out for the fullback job, and that couldn't be allowed to happen to the pampered darling of the powers that be! That's the real reason coach dropped the boom on me—or maybe it was a teacher, what's the diff? It's all because I don't bow and scrape to you!"

"You're crazy! What the heck have I got to do with your flunking geometry?"

"Hah! And you call *me* stupe! You get all the breaks around here. You're the big-shot athlete. You're an A student. You look down your nose at me because I don't grind after top marks. Hah!"

"If your old man wasn't a University professor and some of the teachers at U High apple-polishers to the University faculty, you wouldn't go so hot. Hah! It burns me when I think I was dope enough to ask my old man to pay tuition to go to U High instead of going to Ann Arbor High in the first place. So I'm fed up, and when I tell coach I won't switch to blocking back and knock myself

out so you can pick the grapes, I'm right away flunking and insubordinate, and *you* pretend you don't know why!"

"Now, wait a sec, Jensen! I earn my marks. I *study* once in a while! I don't hold it against you because you do just enough to get by. That's up to you. But you have no right to intimate that coach—or anybody else—puts me ahead of you just because U High happens to be connected with the University and dad is a professor. You . . ."

"Hah! You've been coddled so long that you believe you *are* big stuff. You're a snob, Thornley. You're a—a—an intellectual snob riding your old man's coat tails!"

Dick still had a mental picture of the way Bart Jensen had stood there, with his legs spread wide and his jaw jutting, while disdain flashed in his black eyes.

"You don't fool everybody, Thornley. The truth is, you haven't got what it takes. You couldn't get by if it weren't for your old man's drag!"

Bart Jensen's words had lodged firmly in the back of Dick's mind. He had tried to tell himself that Jensen was just a sorehead because he lacked brains and was trying to cover the lack with bluster. But he had sometimes wondered.

He had wondered more the next year when Bart Jensen made the Ann Arbor High team as regular fullback. Ann Arbor High was a big Class A high school. A fellow had to be good to make the team there. Dick remembered Jensen's taunt once when he was at a U High game.

"Still the hot-shot, aren't you, Thornley? Big stuff in Class C competition—but you wouldn't make the reserve team at a real school!"

Then there had been the trouble last year. He and

Bart Jensen had both made the Frosh squad. For a while the coach had alternated them at fullback. When he shifted Jensen to wingback, Jensen glowered and grumbled under his breath, but he took it. This situation was different, trying to tell off a Michigan coach. Dick had begun to regain his confidence—until the annual game against the Michigan State Frosh.

There had been a big, bruising tackle on the State Frosh who came from Ann Arbor High and had been a teammate of Bart Jensen. It had certainly seemed odd when Ander—that was the State man's name—had taken the line he followed from the opening whistle: *So you're Thornley, the white-haired boy with the top brass? . . . Your old man's drag won't help you here, Thornley. . . .*

Dick shuddered at the memory of the miserable performance he had turned in during the time he was in that game. Doggone it, a fellow could give himself fight talks, but that unsureness, that doubt, kept creeping back. It was like . . .

"All right, all right, shake it up, you fellows. Kickoff time is scheduled for two o'clock, in case you haven't heard!"

Dick looked up. Labbie Labadie, varsity backfield coach, was of French extraction, and he was as high-strung as the traditional Latin is supposed to be. Labbie never seemed to be anything but excited. He paced the floor of the dressing room as though he were straining at a leash. His glance rested briefly on Dick.

"You all set? How do you feel? Get your ankles taped okay?"

Without waiting for Dick to reply, Labadie pivoted and barked at a brawny, red-haired youth across the room.

"How's that shoulder bandage, Flaherty? Did 'ja have Ben see to it? We can't take any chances on . . ."

"Someone carelessly throwing my name around?"

A tall, slender man in a white T-shirt and white duck pants stuck his head around the door casing of the small training room. Ben Benson, Michigan's varsity trainer, looked at Labadie, cocked an eye at the husky redhead Labadie had barked at.

"Reassure him before he explodes, boy," the trainer said. Everyone was "boy" to Ben Benson.

Mike Flaherty winked at the trainer, grinned at Labadie. "Ben fixed me up all shipshape," Mike said. "You're gonna blow a safety valve if you aren't careful, Labbie."

The buzz in the dressing room suddenly faded. A tall man who looked more like a scholarly professor than the headcoach of a football squad stood in the center of the room. Steve Foster possessed that intangible something that commanded attention. He rarely raised his voice from conversational pitch. He spoke quietly now.

"We will warm up for approximately half an hour. If State is not yet on the field, spread out along the west sideline. Centers and kickers with the wind; ends take the starts with the punts. Other backs down to receive the kicks. Justin will boot at both goals with Pete holding. Try a few for distance, too. We just *might* need three points sometime today."

Steve Foster hesitated briefly, seemed about to add further remarks as his gaze traveled around the circle of players. But he merely said, "All right, everybody out. We'll come back here a few minutes before kickoff time."

Crunch, crunch, crunchety-crunch. . . . Bite of cleated shoes into the macadam surface of the long tunnel to

the playing field. Abrupt momentary blinding sunshine after the duskiness of the tunnel. A roaring yell rising from the Michigan side as cheerleaders ran across the field, turning handsprings and exhorting the crowd. A great blast of sound that had no particular identity.

Booming, high spirals from Earl Crowe and other punters. They bored lazily into the blue sky, floated beautifully, then darted down wickedly. Dick thought: good punters can turn a football into a demon. He concentrated on taking the punts the way Labadie had taught—*Handle them, but make sure you control the ball before you start running.*

He looked around the Stadium after he had tossed the ball upfield and trotted back for another kick. It certainly was different down here on the field. He had seen dozens of Michigan games from the stands ever since he had been old enough to know what a football was. But this was different. Different even from what it had been last year when the Frosh squad had come into the Stadium to give the varsity a practice workout.

He looked down at the shiny yellow pants and the maize-topped sweat socks. No long woolen stockings today. Too hot. He smoothed a hand surreptitiously across the silky maize numeral on the front of his blue jersey. Number 39, Thornley, Fullback. That was the way it read in the official game program.

"How're the butterflies?" Barry Shane grinned as he trotted past.

Dick hesitated, shrugged. No use trying to fool Shane. "They're still there," he said.

"They'll go 'way when the ref blows the whistle to start. Take it easy."

Shane trotted on downfield to the goal line where Heavy Carr, Michigan line coach, was putting the linemen through rigorous charging exercises.

"Take it easy. Hah!"

The words came in a jeering tone. The man who spoke them eyed Dick, and a corner of his mouth lifted in a disdainful grin. "Butterflies. Hah! Don't tell me that the great Thornley has the weemies! I wonder why!"

Bart Jensen turned his back on Dick and took out after a punt. Something inside Dick stirred, and his mouth line tightened. Maybe he should call Jensen. Maybe a good sock in the snozzle was what Jensen needed. The big stupe!

Dick unconsciously rubbed his hand again over the numeral on his jersey. Doggone it, varsity men in the same backfield did not battle one another! Varsity men!

He suddenly realized that he was here on the turf of Michigan Stadium in the uniform of a Michigan varsity man. The experience was as wonderful as the dreams he had had when he was a boy. The nagging doubt in him faded for a time. Some of the tension eased.

The State squad came from the tunnel. A big yell swelled from their side. State wore brilliant green jerseys with three white stripes around the sleeves above the elbows. Glistening green pants with white piping down the sides and big white numerals on the jerseys carried out the motif of State's Green and White. They wore green helmets with a white stripe through the middle from front to back.

". . . That's Ware, State's star back. The stocky guy, Number 45 . . . Hornbleke is Number 21. Big ox, huh? . . . State is no pushover—ever. . . . That lanky guy,

Number 16, that's Dewey, State's candidate for all American end. . . ."

Michigan veterans who had met State in other years commented on State players. Dick sized them up. He picked out a barrel-chested man with the numeral 11 on his jersey. Ander looked bigger than he had as a Frosh player. He was quite a tackle, word from East Lansing had it—and he was quite a needle artist, Dick knew. The tension was suddenly back.

Steve Foster must have made a sign. Captain Kolo gestured and trotted off the field, the squad following. Through the tunnel back to the dressing room. Not so many jokes now. The butterflies in Dick's stomach were holding old home week as Steve Foster stood quietly in the center of the room.

"According to what I read in the papers," the headcoach began quietly, "Michigan is a cinch to be taking a train for Pasadena sometime in December. We have the material—so Flash Flager says—to go through an unbeaten season and wind up in the Rose Bowl.

"Now, I have great respect for Flash Flager as a sports writer. Never let anyone belittle Flager's degree of expertness as a football prognosticator. But this is the last word I want mentioned on this squad about the Rose Bowl. We have a ballgame every Saturday. We will be meeting new problems every Saturday. Our job is to meet those problems to the best of our ability that particular week. Confound it, we cannot afford to dream ahead!"

No player had ever heard Steve Foster use stronger language than that "confound." But he could speak volumes with it in different inflections. And his eyes all but talked.

"Confound it," Steve said suddenly. "We *do* have material for a good ballclub. We're going to *be* a good ballclub—but State has never been one to be awed by newspaper clippings or big names. If we're better, we'll have to prove it right out there on the field.

"Okay, here are the starting assignments. Ends: Manner and Etten. Tackles: Shane and Gross. Guards: Kolo and King. Lee at center. Byrne at quarterback. Crowe and Jensen at the halfbacks, and—" it seemed to Dick that Steve Foster hesitated noticeably as though there were a last-minute doubt in his mind before he added—"Thornley at fullback.

"All right, everybody out . . . the old pepper. . . ."

II

Michigan State Needlers

Yea-a-a Michigan
Yea-a-a Michigan
Yea-a-a Michigan
Fight! Fight! Fight!

SEVEN CHEERLEADERS, their maize sweaters with the blue *M*'s on the front colorful in the October sun, leaped into the air and came down doing handsprings and rolls and backflips as they finished drawing the Yea Michigan cheer from thousands of throats on the Michigan side of the Stadium. Five green-and-white-clad cheerleaders on the State side countered with an equally acrobatic display as they exhorted State rooters in the State Fight cheer.

S—Fight
T—Fight
A—Fight
T—Fight
E—Fight
S T A T E!

“Ready, Kolo?” The voice of the referee off to the side seemed to reverberate oddly against Dick’s eardrums in contrast to the yells. Captain Kolo gave a last look around at the Michigan formation for receiving the kickoff. He waved that Michigan was ready.

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spatted into Dick's hands. He bent over and drove two strides forward toward the inside-tackle spot. He stopped suddenly, pivoted, faked a handoff to Jensen cutting across from the wingback position. A State man was fooled by the deception and tackled Jensen. Dick completed his spin and drove into the opening that Kolo had made between guard and tackle.

"Spinner, spinner! Grab Thornley!"

A State backer-up shifted frantically at the call of a defensive mate. Dick was into the State secondary. His legs churned. *Slant, slant, don't give 'em a front target to shoot at!* He remembered Labbie Labadie's words spoken a hundred times on the practice field. He cut diagonally, and suddenly a driving tackle hit him from behind and slammed him to the turf.

"Second down and two." The referee placed the ball. Dick could hear the exultant yell from the stands. A hand chunked him on the shoulder going into the huddle. "The way to go," Barry Shane said. "Nice."

Dick felt good. Eight yards. If that guy hadn't nailed him from behind, he might have gone for a long gain. But eight yards wasn't to bad.

"Same setup," Pete Byrne said in the huddle. "Except that Jensen takes the handoff this time. 26A. Break."

State's defense followed the Michigan backfield shift. A backer-up yelled warning. The snap from center was just right, and Dick drove forward the two count, half-spun, handed the ball to Jensen as the wingback shot past, then completed the spin. But nobody tackled him. The State defense was shifting across. Jensen was piled up at the line of scrimmage for no gain.

"Same old stuff, Thornley, same old stuff!"

Dick looked up at the State man who spoke. He had the numeral 11 on his jersey. Ander flashed his teeth in a derisive grin.

"Yeah, same old Thornley—only it's worse now. This is no spot for a teacher's pet—this is where the men play!"

In the huddle Pete Byrne flashed a quick glance at Dick, and it seemed to Dick that there was a doubt in the eyes of the quarterback.

"They were just lucky," Pete said. "We'll get 'em this time. 24B."

This time there was no backfield shift. Pete Byrne stayed behind the center in the T, and R. E. Lee spatted the ball into his hands. Pete faked a handoff to Jensen, masked the ball, pivoted and tossed a backward pass to Dick. The fullback grabbed at the ball, half fumbled, clutched it to his body, and churned into the line.

The hole was there momentarily, and Dick should have been into and through the opening. But that precious fraction of a minute when he juggled the ball gave a State backer-up time to hurl his bulk across the hole. Dick went down. The referee shrilled his whistle and bored into the pile of scrimmage.

It was close. The referee beckoned, and the head linesman brought out his chains from the sideline to measure. But the ball was inches short of being a first down. The referee said, "Fourth down and about a half-foot."

"Can't gamble this early in our own territory," Pete Byrne said in the huddle. "Boot it, Earl."

Barry Shane slapped Dick on the hip as the huddle broke. "Don't mind it," Shane said.

R. E. said, "State was lucky. Keep calm, son. Keep calm, I say. We'll get 'em."

Dick saw Bart Jensen eyeing him. Jensen said no word, but his expression was eloquent. It didn't help Dick's low spirits.

He blocked his man on the punt. He was bitterly berating himself. It was not good for a team's morale to be stopped in its first offensive effort. The State man he had blocked got up after Earl's kick had gone out of bounds on the State fourteen.

"I told you," Ander said. He grinned. "If Foster leaves you in here, we'll stop the famed Michigan attack cold!"

State strategy became very quickly apparent. They ran from a T and tried one quick-opener, which Shane slowed and R. E. smothered for a meager two-yard gain. Then Ware, State's star, caught Michigan off balance with a quick-kick. It was a prodigious punt. The ball rolled dead on the Michigan twenty.

"Okay." Pete Byrne was grim in the huddle. "They figure they're going to whip us down and have things their own way. Let's show 'em. 14C."

14C caught State as much off balance as their quick-kick had caught Michigan. The play unwound beautifully. Three men handled the ball in the Michigan backfield, and two State tacklers smothered Dick—but Dick did not have the ball. His shovel lateral to Earl was good, and Earl cocked his arm and rifled a pass diagonally across the State secondary. Bill Manner, veteran Michigan end, was racing from his flank position, and he took the ball over his shoulder without breaking stride. He streaked down the sideline. It might have been a touchdown if Bill had had a bit more speed. Ware, playing safety for State, pinched the veteran Michigan end out of bounds on the State thirty-six.

State dug in. A spin-buck netted three yards. Another State man threw a barb at Dick as they got up.

"Too bad your old man left Michigan. He could have maybe kept you in the lineup. It's a cinch that Foster won't have you in here long."

During the next play came a bit of dialogue between two State men for Dick's benefit.

"Yeah, this Thornley was hot stuff in high school. His old man was a professor, and you know how that goes. . . . Oh, sure, I remember. He bogged the Michigan offense last year in the Frosh game, didn't he? Too bad when a guy can't live up to the big build-up."

Captain Kolo heard the needling. He flashed a look at Dick. Marion Frances Kolo had come up through a hard school the hard way. He spoke bluntly to Dick.

"Don't take that stuff. You let 'em get you down, and they'll chase you out of the Stadium. Shove it back at 'em a little better than they hand it out to you."

Jensen broke away on a wingback reverse and carried the ball to the State twenty. First down. A spinner and Dick bulled his way to the sixteen. State piled up Earl Crowe. Dick knew that his failure to handle the ball cleanly had ruined the timing of the play.

"You're about through, Thornley! . . . Foster'll be sending in the first string fullback any minute now. . . . Just watch Thornley, gang, and you can't miss. . . ."

The barbs came from State men after every play. Dick tried desperately not to let the needling get him. This was standard practice. But the doubt persisted that had been in him since Frosh year, and before.

He saw Kolo scowl at him. Barry Shane said, "If you

let these guys know they're getting your goat, it will go on all season. Snap out of it."

But the Michigan attack sputtered and misfired. Michigan backfield play was below the standard of a Foster-coached offense. It needed every down in each series to grind to a first down on the State nine-yard line. Michigan cheerleaders massed at the goal line, waved their arms toward the end zone while the Michigan stands roared, "Go! Go! Go!"

It took Michigan three downs to get to the two. State's goal-line defense was very, very tough. Fourth down and goal to go.

"We'll fox 'em." Pete Byrne said. "They'll expect a plunge. We're running 22A. Break."

Dick's heart leaped into his throat. 22A called for perfect timing and absolutely smooth ball handling. The backfield shifted to a single wing strong to the left. R. E. spiraled the ball diagonally to Jensen. The wingback slanted back, and State men yelled, "Reverse! Reverse!"

But Jensen handed the ball to Dick as he dashed in front of him. Dick held the oval for a one count, half spun. The ball dragged against his hip as he carried it back for the lateral to Earl Crowe. Earl was cutting sharply to the left.

That bobble against his hip was fatal to Dick's lateral pass, threw it a fraction of a second off in timing. Dewey, State's ace end, flashed in front of Earl and picked the ball out of the air. Earl's desperate tackle slipped off the State end. Dewey raced for the goal line with no Michigan man in front of him.

Dick sped after the flying State end. He reached deep

into his reserve and poured more speed into his legs. A desperate refrain beat in his brain. *You've got to catch him. It's your fault he's loose!* Just over the fifty-yard line his half-tackle, half-block knocked the State man out of bounds on the Michigan forty-seven.

A flock of replacements came from the Michigan side. Mike Flaherty touched Dick on the shoulder.

"I'll take over for a while," Mike said. "You nailed that guy just at the right time, Dick."

Dick trotted disconsolately to the sideline. Steve Foster, his headcoach, met him at the entrance to the players' section. In Michigan Stadium the players sit in box seats in the stands, not on benches. Michigan's headcoach said quietly, "Good tackle, Dick. You saved us six points."

Dick sank into a chair. Yes, he'd saved six points—but he had cost a touchdown by bungling the lateral to Earl.

He sat there hunched in his chair and ached inside. He was a flop. Jensen was right—he didn't have what it takes. Oddly enough, he seemed to be hearing chimes. But the Baird Carillon Chimes from Burton Memorial Tower on the campus did not play Saturday afternoons. Dick shook himself. Then he was remembering how the chimes had sounded so gloomy and final that night in Freshman year when he crossed the campus after his dreary performance against State.

The imagined sounds of the chimes brought a flood of emotions. Michigan was in his blood. A fellow could not go to school all his life in Ann Arbor and grow up in the Michigan atmosphere without being saturated with the Michigan spirit. Michigan spirit! And he had gone out there and let those State guys get his goat. He had let Michigan down.

His thoughts reverted inevitably to those high school days. Had the teachers at U High and the coaches given Dick Thornley the breaks because of his dad? He wondered as he had wondered a thousand times whether he could have gone to Ann Arbor High as Bart Jensen had done and made the grade.

Dick moved restlessly in his seat. He watched the play out on the field, but he could not bring his thoughts out of his particular quagmire. Michigan had broken up a State fourth down pass into the end zone and taken the ball on its own twenty. The Michigan attack suddenly came to life. It rolled to three first downs in a row.

That should show you, Dick thought bitterly. Flaherty *fits* in there in the key spot. Doggone it, you've had it drilled into you that the fullback job is the key place in the Michigan system. It must have a deceptive, spinning, ball-handling fullback to make it go, but above everything else, the backfield has to be a unit. It's not a smooth unit with you in at fullback. You and Jensen just don't click. You can't go out there and feel toward Jensen as you do and be tense and afraid you'll throw a monkey wrench into the works. Doggone that Jensen. But is it Jensen? Or is it you?

Words his father had said ran through Dick's mind: *Son, I'm taking the position offered me as Head of Department at Ohio State. I'm going to be frank with you. Things have come up that convince me it is the best move for all concerned.*

Funny, a fellow never thought that his father's position would affect his relationships in school. It must be that unconsciously he had been leaning on something all the time. Oh, nuts, he'd never been a leaner! Darn Bart Jensen!

Dad had not decided to take the Ohio State job until after Jensen had gone to his office griping to him because Professor Thornley had flunked him in Psychology I. Just what had . . .

A wild roar from the Michigan stands broke in on Dick's thoughts. A blue-jerseyed man rose from beneath a pile of green jerseys in the end zone. It was Jensen. Bart Jensen had scored the year's first Michigan touchdown.

Dick was on his feet and yelling with other Michigan reserves, but the ache inside him was so intense that it was almost unbearable.

III

First Game Movies

AS HE ENTERED the Athletic Administration Building the Monday following the Michigan State game, Dick tried to throw off the moroseness that had held him since Saturday. He came through the State Street entrance, glanced through the open door of Steve Foster's office, and saw that Steve was not in. He supposed that Foster was upstairs in the movie room. Dick noted briefly the pictures of famous Michigan teams and players that adorned the walls of the coach's office.

He stopped a moment to look at the big trophy case along the lobby wall outside Steve's office: track trophies, golf cups, Penn Relay and Drake Relay banners. A gape at the front of the case held only a small card on which was typed, "This Space Reserved for the Little Brown Jug." Minnesota had won a hard-fought battle last year, and the famed Jug rested in a trophy niche in Minneapolis.

Michigan would bring it back to Ann Arbor this year.

Dick stared at the vacant space as he thought about the Jug. Funny. If he was so confident that Michigan would trim Minnesota's Golden Gophers this year, why in heck couldn't he have that same degree of confidence in Dick Thornley? He went up the stairs to the room on

the second floor where game movies were shown, and the irritating restlessness was still in him.

"Hi, Dick. All set for the flicker-flick? . . . Wait'll you see that slam-bang tackle you hit Hornbleke with, Dick. No wonder the guy fumbled. . . ."

"Hi, Barry, R. E. Thanks. Guess I was lucky to be in his way." Dick acknowledged his teammates' comments. He suddenly felt warm and good as he took a seat.

"Well, what's the holdup? . . . Yeah, let's get the show on the road. . . . Hope they've got a Mickey Mouse. . . ."

That Mickey Mouse remark had come to be a stock comment at Monday game movies. Somebody drew the shades over the windows, and the room became completely dark. R. E. was sitting beside Dick, and the center abruptly heaved and said, "Hey, what the ding-ding! Can't you see this seat is taken? Why don't you—oh, it's you." R. E. moved over a seat.

"Had to see you, R. E.," a voice said. Dick peered through the semi-darkness and saw that it was Del Gregon who had crowded in between him and R. E. Del Gregon was publicity director and a good fellow. The light of the projector was turned on, and in the dim glow Dick caught Gregon's wink as the publicity director puffed out his cheeks in unconscious mannerism and smoothed a hand across thinning hair.

"Why you gotta see me?" R. E. asked. "Why, I say?"

"A flock of Detroit newspapermen are in my office. They want to interview you. Bulwark of Michigan's line; able successor to Michigan's great pivot men. All that, you know."

R. E. Lee jerked half out of his chair. His tone was one of panic.

"Migosh!" he ejaculated. "O migosh, I say! You know blame well I don't want publicity, Dell Migosh, I can't face newspapermen. Let me out of here! I . . ."

"Sit down!" Gregon's whispered admonition was full of mirth. "You never will get over falling for that gag, will you? Sometime please give me the low-down on why you shy away from publicity as though you were a hush-hush secret or something."

R. E. sat down. He drew in a long breath and let it out slowly. He muttered, "A low-down Yankee trick, I say."

Gregon said to Dick, "Nice game Saturday. Like to have you drop into my office a minute after the movie. The *Ann Arbor News* wants some specific dope on you. Home town boy and all that."

Dick peered sharply. Gregon blew out his cheeks and smoothed his hair. He grinned.

"No gag," he said. "Flash Flager will probably be around to see you, too. He's going to write a feature on 'Michigan's Sophomore Sockeroo' for his paper. That's you. You captured Flager's imagination with the defensive game you put out Saturday. I'd like to add my personal plug, too. You were really hitting those . . ."

The whirring of the projector interrupted Del Gregon. A replay of the State game as caught by the camera was flashed on the screen.

In a moment, Jerry Etteboon, varsity end coach, broke in on the movie, asked the operator to run the film back a few feet.

"See that block you missed there, Manner?" the end

coach said. "If you had cut down that State end following across, he wouldn't have tackled Thornley. You can expect plenty of blocking work this week!"

Then it was Labbie Labadie. The backfield coach's tone was full of disgust.

"Did we look bad on that quick-kick! You've got to be alert every minute in a football game. Spizzola!"

Comment from the coaches continued. Then came the play that had nearly cost a touchdown on the State lateral interception. The camera had not caught the ball hitting Dick's hip. Steve Foster said, "Bad timing there. Nice defensive work on the part of Thornley."

"I bungled it," Dick blurted. "I threw off the timing."

Nobody said anything. Dick thought he heard a muttered "Hah!" in a tone that he knew well.

The room was silent as State's off-tackle drives began shoving Michigan back. No one spoke as the State tying touchdown was depicted on the screen. The State attack was continuing to roll as the first quarter ended.

Dick was remembering Steve Foster's and Heavy Carr's frantic efforts to stop that devastating State drive as the men from East Lansing started off the second quarter with a slant off-tackle for a first down. Steve and Heavy sent man after man into the game. Dick remembered Steve sending him back into the game. *Go in for Flaherty. Tear that tackle slant apart, Dick. You can do it.*

Dick sat there in the movie room and watched a figure on the screen wearing Number 39 make tackle after tackle as the State off-tackle slant suddenly bogged. It made him feel good to know that he had really taken that tackle slant apart.

The little camera on top of the pressbox missed very

little. The picture showed Number 39 race across and smear Hornbleke on a cutback; it showed the ball squirt from Hornbleke's grasp and roll on the turf until Barry Shane curled his body around it in a sliding dive.

"You really hit on that tackle, Dick." Labadie's words cut through the silence of the movie room. "You hit 'im with authority!"

The camera had swiveled to show the scoreboard clock, seconds before the end of the half. It was Michigan's ball on the State twenty. A fourth-down pass attempt by Earl Crowe was smothered for a loss. A 7-7 tie score, time running out, and the ball on the twenty-four. Bob Justin raced out from the Michigan side, and the camera followed him all the way, focusing on him while Automatic Jus stood on the thirty and swung his trusty foot as Pete Byrne held, and the ball sailed over the crossbar.

"Good for a 10-7 edge at the half," Labbie Labadie said. "Smart football, in my book."

Dick remembered Steve's admonition to Pete Byrne between halves in the dressing room last Saturday.

"Three points isn't much of a margin," Steve had told the quarterback. "But play it safe. We want this game, sure—but remember that California and Minnesota and Illinois scouts are in the pressbox. Make State take the chances; the pressure is on them."

As he sat and watched the second half of the game unwind on the screen, Dick realized how shrewdly Pete Byrne had run the team. Michigan was on the defensive most of the half. The few times that they took the offensive, Number 39 would trot off, and Mike Flaherty would come out from the bench. As he watched himself come in and go out of the game so often, Dick became

aware of a thing that had not impressed him sufficiently at the time.

Each time Michigan substituted, Steve sent in a group of men. It was almost as though Steve were playing a defensive team and a separate offensive unit.

That Number 39 showed up in the film as quite a defensive man, too! Dick grinned to himself at the thought. What was that dim idea you had about shaky confidence in yourself, Thornley? Okay, so look at that! Ware would have been away on that pass if Number 39 hadn't raced across and batted the ball down just as the State star's fingers were clutching it.

The screen reviewed the play that had clinched the victory for Michigan. State had been forced to punt after Dick Thornley had knocked the almost-complete pass from Ware. Earl Crowe had gathered in the ball, drawn the State defense over, reversed his field, and barreled sixty-seven yards for the clinching touchdown.

Heavy Carr observed, "I hope all of you linemen whom I've been trying to teach full-body blocks saw the block that Thornley threw on Ander. It was the key block. Ander could have nailed Crowe."

A disturbing thought suddenly occurred to Dick. If that punt had been to Bart Jensen, would Number 39 have made that swell block?

The movie ended with a shot of the scoreboard showing University of Michigan, 17; Michigan State, 7.

Steve Foster spoke briefly. "The coaching staff is naturally satisfied with the win over State. But we've got plenty of smoothing up to do, and little time to do it in. We leave Thursday by plane for Berkeley. I'll state flatly right now that California will be just as tough as State, and perhaps

a lot tougher. Men who got into the game Saturday are excused from practice today, but there will be heavy work for everybody tomorrow."

The squad shuffled out of the room and down the stairs. Dick spent only a minute in Del Gregon's office, just to check on a few facts that Del already had on his card. A group of his teammates were outside when Dick emerged from the building.

". . . I'm telling the world that I'm glad to get by that State gang by *any* score." Mike Flaherty grimaced and half winced as he rubbed his shoulder. "It was like a brick wall socking you when that guy Hornbleke hit!"

"I didn't find any of 'em exactly soft," Barry Shane said. He poked Dick in the ribs. "But Dick made Hornbleke like it."

"State guys kinda made Thornley like it, too." Bart Jensen laughed. "Hah!"

It wasn't really a laugh, and nobody joined in. Barry Shane eyed Dick queerly, and Dick saw Kolo looking at him. Dick flushed. He said quietly, "I didn't like it. I can't blame anybody but myself, I guess."

Barry Shane scowled. An odd light gleamed in his blue eyes. R. E. Lee glared at Bart Jensen. Then suddenly Shane and R. E. and Earl Crowe were all talking at once as though they were trying to cover up a bad situation.

". . . State's always up for us. . . . California is gonna be up, too, I say. . . . Wonder if Steve is planning on separate defensive and offensive units? . . . Kinda looks that way . . . the pattern during the second half Saturday, anyway. . . ."

Well, Dick ruminated as the group separated, Steve was certainly a smart coach. If he had the material and the

rules did not cramp substitutions, why not? Dick suddenly grinned at his own enthusiasm.

That tactic would make it better for a certain guy to make the team as fullback, wouldn't it? Defensive fullback. So what? He'd taken that State tackle drive apart, hadn't he?

He began to whistle. At that moment the nagging insecurity was pushed deep down into Dick's subconscious.

IV

Doc Cook's Turtle Demonstrates

THE THICK book on the study table in front of him might have been written in Greek, for all the sense he was getting from the text. Dick stared absently at the title across the top of a page: *Chemistry—Quantitative Analysis*.

Come out of the fog, he told himself. What the heck happened to you? You were on top of the world after the movie. Now you sit here like a dope and hash over things that you might better leave unhashed.

The door to the room he shared with Specs Cook opened, and his roommate came in. The slim Specs had a damp print of a picture in his hand and a smudge on one cheek. He pushed the crosspiece of his shell-rimmed glasses higher on the bridge of his nose and peered at Dick as he laid the print on the table.

"Not bad, huh?" Specs said proudly. "Considering that the light wasn't too good and I didn't have the proper lens for a distant shot like that."

The picture was clear and sharp. Specs had been excited about photography as a hobby for over a month. Dick suspected from the excellence of the print and Specs' deprecatory remarks that he would soon be seeking a new hobby. He always did when he began to master the current one.

This was a picture of the Michigan Marching Band in a formation that they had made between halves of the State game. It was a clearly discernible Spartan, honoring the fighting nickname of Michigan State.

"It's doggone good," Dick said. "Where'd you take it from?"

"Top of the pressbox."

"How'd you get up there?"

Specs grinned. "Just talked with the guy guarding the stairs and darned if he didn't get the idea that I was taking shots for the *Ensign*, or something."

Dick grinned. That Specs! Of course, the fact that he was on the yearbook staff, and had a finger in many campus pies did contribute somewhat to his success at cutting through red tape. Specs dropped into a chair and admired the glossy print. As usual, he appeared to be in no great hurry to get to his studies. Dick sighed. He knew that he had plenty of work to do so he'd better get at it.

"Look," Specs said after a while. "Might do you good to talk about it."

"Talk about what?"

"Don't try to hand old Doc Cook a stall. Talk about the thing that's eating you."

Dick stared at his roommate, then down at his book. He said, "Suppose you diagnose my ills, Doctor Cook?"

"Can do." Specs flashed a kind of solemn grin. "Could be that a Doc Cook treatment is just what you need."

"To begin with," Specs said, "the nice balance between aggression and deference is out of kilter in you. You're bothered by a—well, complex—that's a sort of outmoded word, but it'll do. You've always been tops, and now sud-

denly you aren't and you're wondering if maybe you were tops only because you leaned on the fact that your dad was a professor. Maybe your complex sort of unbalances the autonomy and avoidance drives, too."

Dick stared wide-eyed at his roommate. The solemn grin wrinkled the longish face of Specs again briefly.

"Psychoanalysis freely made and psychiatric treatment cheerfully given," Specs said. "Could be that you need a dash more exhibitionism to lay low the inferiority, too. It's just about a cinch that you are well over the line toward introversion as versus extroversion, and I'll throw in for good measure a surmise that your integration has been shaken, not to go so far as to say that disintegration is in the ascendancy."

"Doggone if you don't sound like dad," Dick said. He did not attempt to keep admiration from his tone. "You sure surprise a fellow. But please remember, I'm just a lug in Engine School. What are you talking about?"

"You compliment me when you say I sound like your dad." Specs was abruptly very serious. "I came to Michigan chiefly because I wanted to study psychology under Dr. Theral Thornley. Then he ups and goes to Ohio State before I can have my schedule shuffled around so I can get into one of his classes. Psych is my racket, Dick. Seriously, all the dollar-and-a-half words I was throwing around boil down to one thing—you've had the props kicked from under you somehow. You act like a guy who has lost his confidence."

Dick sighed. "Suppose I buy that," he said. "What do I do about it?"

"You get it back. You sell yourself the idea that you're

just as good as any toad in the puddle—yeah, better. The one thing you *don't* do is sit around with your chin hanging below your belt buckle and mope.”

Specs reached over and closed the quantitative analysis book.

“Come on,” he said. “You aren’t doing yourself any good sitting here staring at a bunch of words that don’t register.”

Abruptly, he reached in a pocket and pulled out a little plastic turtle. A string was fastened to the middle of the turtle’s back. Specs straightened out the string, dropped the turtle on the floor, then pulled the string. The turtle darted off at an angle as though it were alive.

“Saw this thing in the dime store this noon,” Specs said. “It intrigued me. I’m gonna have one of you Engine School guys take it apart after a bit and see what makes it tick. Some sort of spring arrangement, I guess.”

He worked the string again, and the turtle skittered across the floor.

“Some gadget, huh?” Specs asked. “Dick, you are about to witness one of your Engine School wizards being taken for a ride.”

Dick suddenly grinned. “You mean you’re going to challenge Goldman to a race with his famous jeep?”

“Ever since he got that darned windup jeep, Goldman’s been bragging. He figured out the ratio and its proportional speed was fifteen miles an hour; then he put Scotch tape upside down on the wheels to increase the traction so that it would go a little faster. That’s all right, but you know the fable about the hare and the turtle? Well, I needled Goldman a bit this aft.

“I’ve got him all steamed up. He practically frothed at

the mouth when I told him I had a little old toy turtle that could trim his jeep in a race. 'Course, he thinks it's a windup turtle. We've got a bet of a chocolate malt."

Specs chuckled. "We even got Red to borrow a stop watch to time the race."

Fourteen boys roomed at the house on Greenwood where Dick had found accommodations after his family had moved from Ann Arbor. Every one of the fourteen now crowded into the second floor hall, lined both sides of the wall, stood at the finish line, a chalkmark that Red had drawn across the far end.

"Got the one-lunger greased and ready to go?" Specs spoke carelessly to a stocky youth with sleek black hair. "Or did you decide you'd better forfeit the malt 'stead of risking your wonder's prestige?"

Goldman scowled. "Talk, talk, talk," he said. "Anybody would know you're a campus politician. Let's see this marvelous turtle."

Specs drew the turtle from his pocket, put it on the floor, straightened the string. Goldman let out a howl.

"Hey, you said it was a windup turtle! I know those things! No race, I've been gypped!"

"You have not been gypped, my friend." Specs turned to the boys at the starting place. "I quote: 'I have a *mechanical* turtle that can beat the wheels off your mighty jeep.' Unquote. That right, guys?"

"That's right."

"Mechanical was the term he used, Goldman."

"I've been gypped!" Goldman howled again. "I've seen those things before. They go like greased lightning!"

"Well, if you want to concede that my little old turtle will run away from your jeep, why . . ."

"I don't concede anything. My jeep takes on all comers!"

Goldman and Specs argued about who would act as starter. They argued about the hazard that Specs insisted should be across the hall midway of the race course. They compromised by putting a thinner book under Goldman's engineering drawing board, thus making a less steep incline. Agreement was finally reached on all contested points. Goldman and Specs crouched at one end of the hall, their gadgets poised.

"On your marks!" Red called. "Get set! Go!"

The jeep's wheels began to turn as Goldman released his grip on them. It purred along on a straight path. Specs pulled the string of his turtle. It zinged off twice as fast as the jeep, but it zinged at a sharp angle and rammed into the wall.

"Wow, look at that thing! He's developed a slicer!"

"Yeah, worse'n my golf slicer!"

Specs manipulated the string frantically. The turtle lunged the opposite way and collided with the wall on the other side.

"Now he's got a hook!"

"Come on, Specs, get that thing untracked!"

"Plenty of speed, but no control!"

The jeep buzzed steadily along a straight path. It was almost to the inclined hazard of the drawing board. Specs had to chase his turtle into Red's room when the little gadget perversely shot off at an angle and through the open door.

"My money is on the jeep. . . . Come on, Specs, hang in there. . . . Wow, 'ja ever see anything like that turtle? . . . C'mon, Goldman, show 'em the machine age will triumph. . . ."

The jeep ran down before it made the hazard. The boys had agreed that it could be rewound once and also that it had to make the hazard in one continuous try. Goldman twisted the winding key and started the jeep at the bottom again. The jeep was over the barrier and purring along toward the finish. Specs was forced to make three tries before the turtle managed to go straight enough to climb the hazard.

"Your turtle's licked, Specs. . . . Might as well give up. . . . Hey, now the thing is going backwards! . . . You're licked, Specs. . . ."

"I'll take all bets," Specs yelled. "Chocolate malts at the Union! We haven't lost confidence, me'n this old turtle!"

"Done. . . . You're on, you optimist. . . . I'll take a malt, too. . . . Count me in. . . . 'N me. . . ."

No one ever knew whether Specs had been deliberately manipulating the turtle in order to get more chocolate malt bets. But suddenly the gadget began going straight every time. The jeep was overhauled in three charging, darting sashays. Specs jerked the string. The final lunge of the turtle was at an angle, but it surged past the jeep over the line and whammed into the wall at the end of the hall when the jeep was still six inches short of the finish line.

Specs picked up the turtle, gave it an exaggerated pat on the back. He counted out the bets he had made, pointing to each one who had lost.

"Six malts." He chuckled. "Just enough to cover my daily ration next week, and all for free! I'll let you guys know which day you can each have the honor."

Specs looked around the group, grinning. He shoved

his glasses higher on his nose, then peered at his roommate.

"Just goes to show you," Specs observed at large. "You can't beat the old confidence. My little old turtle never doubted he was the best man!"

V

Wolverines versus Golden Bears

IT CERTAINLY was a beautiful campus, seen from the air like this. Dick had his face pressed against a window of the airliner along with other members of the Michigan squad. The pilot was taking the big plane over the University of California campus as low as he safely could.

"That's their stadium," Mike Flaherty said. "Gosh, it looks as though it's built right at the foot of a mountain."

"Well, that's no ant hill, pal," Pete Byrne said. "They do have mountains in California, you know."

"My, my, listen to the erudition!" Mike grinned. "Probably the reason why you give orders and I take 'em."

The plane circled a bit. San Francisco Bay loomed within sight of the boys.

"Wonder if that's the Bay Bridge or Golden Gate Bridge we can see," Barry Shane said.

"That's Bay Bridge," Dick said. "Golden Gate Bridge is farther west. It's got a longer span but not such high towers."

"Well, more erudition!" Shane whistled in mock admiration. "You sound like a native Californian, and here I thought you were strictly Ann Arbor. You been out here before, Dick?"

"Nope. I just browsed through a couple of books before we left."

Bart Jensen said, "Of course, a big dumb tackle wouldn't understand, Shane. You gotta be an intellectual giant. Hah!"

Dick bit his lips. He had had no intention of showing off. Doggone that Jensen. He wasn't kidding, not the way he'd said it. Dick saw Barry Shane look at him quickly. Barry grinned easily, reached over and passed a hand across Jensen's face.

"Keep it clean," Barry said. "And it wouldn't be a bad idea to remember respect for your betters."

The banter was suddenly all gone. Dick thought gloomily, it must be me. Other guys can kid back and forth, but whatever I say seems to be dynamite. Doggone it, is this all tied in with my riding on dad's position? Am I an intellectual snob?

He walked from the plane, struggling with the old doubts. He did not notice that he was behind Steve Foster and Heavy Carr until he heard Steve's low-toned comment to the line coach.

"I'm worried, confound it," Steve said. "I'm scared of this one, Leo."

"I'm scared, too," Heavy Carr admitted. "I'm afraid our kids are underrating California because Coast teams have had a rough time against Western Conference competition the last couple of years."

It sounded odd to hear Heavy Carr addressed as Leo. Steve always called him Leo, but everyone else called the bull-necked line coach Heavy. It was peculiar, too, that the headcoach should be generally known as Steve while the university publications listed him as Jerome Jeremiah Fos-

ter. Maybe Flash Flager's yarn that Steve had been tagged with the famous composer's name because he loved music was the explanation.

Dick did not want to be an eavesdropper, so he slowed up to allow the coaches to get out of earshot. But he could not help overhearing a bit more.

"Somebody is going to learn the hard way that Coast football is sound, Leo. *Confound* it, we could be the ones!"

The coaches must have got together. They bore down during the workout Friday. They harped on the evils of over-confidence right up to the moment it was time to leave the dressing room for the kickoff.

"This California team is big and fast and rugged," Steve Foster warned. "They've got the mental edge. They're sharp for this one because Coast sports writers have been needling Pacific Coast Conference football as compared with Western Conference football. Let me remind you that you are going against Western Conference football today.

"None of you played when Dad Lawrod coached at Indiana, but most of you played against Indiana last year. You know the type of football they play. They play Dad Lawrod football. In order to get Lawrod to come to the Coast, California gave him more money than Western Conference schools are allowed to pay their coaches. You can depend on it that Dad Lawrod has been establishing his system and developing the same rugged players in the two years he's been coaching at California. All right, go out there and play the football you can play."

That Steve and his assistants had not just been crying wolf became very quickly evident to the Michigan squad. California won the toss and elected to receive. Their full-back took Justin's soaring kickoff on the goal line, plowed

straight up the middle behind hard and sharp blocking, and was not dragged down until he had crossed the California thirty. Then it began.

The fullback powered over tackle for six yards. California came right back with a wingback reverse into the same spot, and it was good for a first down. The California crowd roared. Golly, Dick thought, Steve wasn't kidding. These guys really hit. That was a real block somebody hung on me that last play.

A spinner was good for four yards. California backs performed hidden magic with the ball on the next play, and Dick was fooled. He tackled the California fullback viciously as he popped through the line, but there was no referee's whistle. The fullback had slipped the ball to a halfback. He ran to the Michigan forty-two before he was knocked out of bounds. Michigan called a time out.

"What goes on?" R. E. Lee demanded. "These guys are making us look terrible. Terrible, I say!"

Nobody said anything. R. E. stamped angrily around the circle. R. E. took seriously his job of defense leader.

"We'll change to a seven-man line. Dick, come in a little closer on that tackle smash. We gotta stop these guys!"

But California's Golden Bears were in no mood to be stopped. They were smart and well coached. Evidently scouting reports on Michigan had been thorough, too. The California quarterback took immediate advantage of the changed Michigan defensive alignment. From a setup that started exactly like the wingback reverse, their passer took a backward toss from the fullback, leaped into the air and rifled a jump-pass to an end cutting diagonally through the Michigan secondary.

The end swivel-hipped away from the tackle that Dick

launched at him. Bart Jensen raced over from his position to force the ball carrier out of bounds, but it was a California first down on the Michigan three.

"Hahl!" Bart Jensen barked at Dick. "So now you can't even make the tackles you're supposed to make!"

"Listen, Mr. Football, keep your wise remarks to yourself!" Dick glared. His fists were clenched. "So I missed a tackle. How many yards have you made so far?"

He didn't think until he was back in defensive position that neither Jensen nor any other Michigan man had so far had a chance to make yardage. Well, nuts! That Jensen guy was . . . He broke off. California's touchdown strategy was under way.

It was neat, above reproach.

They rammed their pile-driving fullback straight at the middle on the first play. Orthodox football. Michigan's line surged and heaved, and Dick and R. E. slammed in so that the fullback was stopped with no gain. Dick was so angry that the savagery of his tackle caused even R. E. to stare.

"The way to go!" R. E. yelled. "Whip 'em right here! Show 'em who's boss, I say!"

California snapped from the huddle into formation. The ball went to the fullback. Dick drove hard at the point of attack, and Kolo and Shane and Hank Gross charged fast. The fullback was stopped cold—but there was no whistle to signal that the ball was dead. Dick looked around frantically. The California quarterback was performing a jubilant prance as he crossed the goal line at the corner of the end zone. He had the ball.

The conversion try was good, and a seven went on the scoreboard for California, while the Stadium rocked with exultant cheers.

The offensive replacements trotted from the Michigan bench to receive the kickoff. Mike Flaherty smacked Dick on the shoulder as he came out. Dick said, "Go get 'em, Mike." Mike nodded, said, "We'll go."

"Sure we'll go," Bart Jensen said. "The first string is in now!"

Dick's lips were tight as he watched Earl Crowe bring the kickoff back to the fourteen. He was wondering how long it would be before he took a sock at Jensen. Doggone the guy anyway. Serve him right if he bobbled something and looked bad.

Hey, you can't think like that! Act your age, Thornley!

The California line smothered Mike Flaherty on a spin-buck. Second and eight. The big California forwards charged through and smeared Jensen before he had a chance to get under way.

"Confound it!" Steve Foster growled. "We're dead on our feet!"

"They're outchargin' us." Heavy Carr's tone was grim. "They'll take us to the cleaners proper if we don't snap out of it!"

Earl Crowe swept the California flank on third down. He did not sweep far enough for a first down. Michigan was forced to punt, and the defensive unit came back on the field.

California brought the punt back to their forty-five. Their attack resumed just where they had left off on the previous touchdown drive.

Slam! The big fullback ripped over guard for six yards before Dick knocked the legs from under him. Zowie! A cutback through the same spot was good for a first down on the Michigan forty.

Michigan again went into a seven-man line. They threw back a smash at Shane's tackle. Dick had a hunch on the next play and faded. His hunch was good, but so was that murderous jump-pass. Dick's fingers barely grazed the ball. The California end grabbed the ball and raced to the eighteen before they got him. What was going on! Couldn't they stop this Golden Bear offense? They *had* to stop it!

They did not stop it. Not that drive. California shoved their second touchdown over in exactly four more plays. The Golden Bears began jabbing the needle then.

"So this is the great Michigan team, Western Conference champions! . . . It can't be. This must be the reserves! . . . Yeah, wonder when they're gonna send in the first team? . . ."

Michigan linemen dug in their cleats. Dick tensed as the teams lined up for the try-for-point. He timed his charge exactly right. He was leaping through a slit between Kolo and Shane as the ball was snapped. He catapulted into the California backfield so fast that the attempted block a man threw at him missed. He lunged upward and felt the stinging weight of the ball as it hit his chest. He had blocked the kick, and the California score remained at 13.

Captain Kolo whacked Dick on the shoulder as they went upfield. "Nice going," Kolo said. He eyed Dick. "Sometimes you look like the footballer you oughta be."

Whether it was that blocked kick or whether Michigan men abruptly realized that they were tangling with a tough ballclub, the Wolverines suddenly came to life. Crowe lugged the kickoff to the twenty-six. Flaherty faked a spinner, masked the handoff to Jensen so smoothly that the wingback was into the secondary before California

knew he had the ball. He made Michigan's initial first down of the game.

"Now they're rolling," Heavy Carr muttered. "They're charging."

Earl Crowe off tackle for four. Right back inside the same tackle for three. Mike bulling over guard for a yard more than the first down. Now we're cooking with gas! The way to go in there, Mike. Sock it to 'em, you tough Irisher!

Dick was on his feet with other Michigan men. The attack kept moving. Over the midfield stripe. Good old driving, rock-'em-and-sock-'em football. Pete Byrne drove them relentlessly.

Mike for five on a spinner. Jensen through a quick opening for three. California did no needling now. They dug in. The gains got shorter. It was fourth down and a yard to go on the California thirty. Pete Byrne never hesitated. He gave the ball to Mike, and the burly fullback ripped and slammed and made eighteen inches more than the needed yard.

Slam! Wham! Slash! Drive!

Then, when Pete had California's defense bunched to stop that power through the line, the cagey Michigan quarterback slipped out into the flat on the man-in-motion setup that had been only a decoy—and took a wide lateral from Earl Crowe and scored from the twelve without a hand being laid on him.

Bob Justin came off the bench, stood there on the ten-yard line, kept his head down as Labbie Labadie had taught him, and calmly booted the ball between the up-rights and over the crossbar.

The scoreboard showed California, 13; Michigan, 7,

when the quarter ended. Then, what had started out as a free scoring game settled into a slogging, battering struggle between two great lines and tough defenses. Dick Thornley was in the game a total of nine of the fifteen minutes of playing time of the second quarter. The P.A. system seemed to blare almost constantly: ". . . stopped by Thornley . . . tripped up by Lee and Thornley . . . tackled by Shane and Thornley and Lee. . . ."

It was still California, 13; Michigan, 7, at the end of the first half.

Steve Foster had little to say in the dressing room. Steve Foster did his coaching on the practice field, and he rarely went in for locker room oratory. None of the coaches came up with any we-told-you-so line.

They went around quietly pointing out mistakes that men had made, offering suggestions, allowing the sweating players to rest. Ben Benson and his assistant trainers circulated among the men rebandaging, massaging sore spots. A timer stuck his head in the door and informed Steve that intermission time was about gone. That was when Steve Foster said one short sentence to his squad.

"Confound it, you're better than a six-point-down team. Let's go!"

Michigan received the kickoff to start the second half. The Michigan squad was out at the sideline, yelling encouragement and pepper talk.

"The old fight, gang . . . the old pepper . . . everybody knock somebody down. . . . Let's go, gang. . . ."

It was not a good kick. It slithered toward the sideline, short. Bart Jensen grabbed it on the dead run five yards in from the sideline on the thirty. The Sophomore scat-back took off with the amazing speed that last year had

caused the Frosh coach to shift him from a fullback to a halfback. He tore past the first wave of California tacklers, leaving them clutching at air.

California seemed to expect him to reverse his field. Jensen sped down the sideline. He picked up interference. Blue-jerseyed Wolverines bowled over California tacklers. It was Barry Shane who wiped out the last man with a chance to get Jensen. Barry Shane had been a halfback when he broke into varsity football. He had the speed of a halfback. The big tackle raced downfield ahead of Jensen, and his clean, full body block washed the legs from under the California safety at the thirty-five so that Jensen could have gone the rest of the way at a trot. He cantered into the end zone for the tying points.

Automatic Jus trotted off the bench, stood there nervelessly in the face of the raging California forwards and lifted a perfect kick over the crossbar.

California, 13; Michigan, 14!

That third quarter was slam-bang, fighting football after that touchdown. Dick Thornley and R. E. Lee and the defensive line battled the tricky California attack. Hard, clean blocks. Hard, clean tackles. Only once was a penalty called, and that was for a too-eager lineman being offside.

California threw everything they had at the Wolverines. They were on the Michigan twenty-five when the quarter ended. They lost the ball when a fourth down pass was batted incomplete in the end zone.

The pressure was terrific. It was on California, since they were a point behind, but it was on Michigan as well. Any mistake might cost a touchdown. In the end it was the pressure that gave Michigan possession of the ball deep in California territory. Time was running out, and

the California quarterback gambled on a running play from punt formation. Michigan was alert. Dick, R. E., and Barry Shane all swarmed over the ball carrier and Michigan took over on the California eighteen.

Only one play was needed for the touchdown.

California evidently expected Michigan to employ stalling tactics, to use up time with plays into the line. Doubtless their scouts had reported that the Michigan defensive backfield did not stay in the ballgame when Michigan was going on offense. This time Steve Foster sent in only Pete Byrne. Dick's pulse leaped. Was Steve giving him another chance as offensive fullback? He looked eagerly at Pete in the huddle.

"We're pulling a cutey," the quarterback said. "Steve's orders. It's a pass on first down. I'm throwing it. Get over in the corner of that end zone, Jensen!"

Michigan did not shift into the single wing. Pete Byrne took the center snap in the T formation. Jensen feinted a block at a defensive end, cut around sharply toward the corner of the field. Pete Byrne faded back rapidly.

"Pass! Pass!"

California players yelled. They sought frantically to cover receivers. Linemen rushed at Pete, and the pass was high and wide. Dick looked up from the ground where he was tangled with the California lineman he had blocked away from Pete and saw Jensen's all-out leap.

He managed to reach the ball with his fingertips, batted it, seemed to turn in midair and clutch the oval as he fell sprawling barely inside the end-zone boundary.

Justin's try-for-point was good. Michigan, 21; California, 13.

That did it. Even a last-minute touchdown could not

catch Michigan now. The gun cracked with the scoreboard figures unchanged.

"Jensen . . . Jensen . . . Was that a catch, or was that a catch! . . . Yea-a-a, Jensen. . . . Guess we showed these glittering Golden Bears that the shine comes off! . . . Jensen. . . ."

Teammates thumped Bart Jensen as they trotted from the field. Jensen's black eyes flashed. He swaggered.

The guy is good, Dick thought. You have to admit that he's got what it takes when the pressure is on.

Dick was suddenly very, very tired.

VI

Flash Flager Probes

SWEAT STREAMED down Dick's face and neck and trickled along his spine. Doggedly he pushed aside fatigue as he crouched in his place in the backfield quartet on the practice field. Labbie Labadie was working them. But if it would make him a smoother fullback, Dick was for even more work.

Labadie suddenly moved the ball he was half crouched over, and Dick shot forward in his tracks along with the other three in his group. Labadie grunted. It was an achievement to get even a grunt of approval from Labadie.

"Some better," he said. "Try it again."

Crouch, tense, eye the ball. At the first twitch, drive your legs as hard as you can. Churn the turf. But how about a breather? We've been at this at least an hour.

"All right," Labadie said. "Take a break. Pass a ball around and keep moving. Keep warm."

Mike Flaherty stood a little distance from Dick. Mike flipped a football toward Dick. "Keep warm!" Mike muttered. "That slave driver! I'm so hot already it'd take me half a day in deep freeze to get cool!"

"I guess we need it, but Labbie sure believes in working a guy."

"Working a guy!" Mike glared toward the backfield coach, then back to Dick. "That's the year's prize understatement. Ever hear about the little dog when Labadie was coach at a teacher's college before he came up to help Steve?"

Dick shook his head.

"Well, it shows that Labadie's always been a slave driver. He used to have a cute custom of making his team trot around the field and sprint the final fifty yards or so whenever he wasn't satisfied with their scrimmage. One year a little mongrel dog got to coming out to practice. Whenever the players had to take off on one of the penalty jogs, the little dog would run along beside them, yapping happily.

"Well, that dog was fat as a butterball when the season started. But Labadie ran his men so much that before the season was half over, the dog had run off so much weight that you could count his ribs. Somebody called the humane society for a gag, told them that Labadie was the owner and that they ought to investigate him. They sent out an investigator, and he gave Labadie a beautiful chewing out—for cruelty to a dumb animal."

Mike sighed. "Darned if I don't think he's got me now so you could count my ribs," he said.

Labadie shouted, "All right, let's go. We're going to get you guys sharp for Wisconsin if we have to run the last ounce of blubber off every one of you!"

"See what I mean?" Mike looked dolefully at Dick. Mike drew his features into a burlesque of Labadie's face. He mimicked the high, nasal, excitable whine of the backfield coach. "I said speed—and *speed* we're going to have! Spizzola!"

It was refreshing to stand under the shower after that workout and let the needle spray wash away the fatigue. Labbie was all right, though. There were only two days of real practice this week, after that long plane ride back from California. Labadie had made them work.

It was good to sit back in the easy chair in the room that night and relax a few minutes before tackling the textbooks. Dick was slouched low in the chair, resting, when someone yelled up the stairs.

"Dick Thornley! You up there?"

"Yea! Who is it?" Dick went to the door.

Steps on the stairs answered him. A slender little man stood in the hall. He wore a mustard-yellow sport coat with a very loud purple-and-red check. Every time he saw the outlandish color combinations Flash Flager affected, Dick thought of Barry Shane's story that the sports writer was called Flash, not because of his flashy attire, but because of his undergraduate days when he had been a track man and had been anything but a flash. Well, it was certain that Flager's clothes would now rate the term "flash."

"Hi, Dick." Flager grinned, came right in. Flager was never bashful when in search of material for his paper. "How goes it, chum?"

Dick said, "Hi." He gestured toward Specs Cook. "My roommate, Specs Cook—Flash Flager, Specs."

Flager's indeterminate brown eyes flicked over Specs as the two shook hands. "Glad you're here," Flager said. "Maybe you can give me some stuff on Thornley that he wouldn't give me himself."

Flager turned to Dick.

"What I'm here for is to get a little dope. I'm going to run a feature on you."

"Gregon said you were."

Flager nodded, took a wad of copy paper from his pocket.

"Gregon gave me this." He read from the paper. "Nineteen years old. Sophomore in the College of Engineering, wants a degree in Metallurgical Engineering. Six feet even, one-ninety-five pounds. Native Ann Arborian—that how you say it? Graduate of University High. Three-sport man in high school. Earned Frosh numerals last year as full-back. Anything else I should know?"

Dick flushed. He was a little embarrassed. He said, "It sounds as though you've got everything."

Flager nodded, put the paper back in his pocket. He said, "Great game you put out in Berkeley. Great defensive work. That try-for-point you blocked was the key play of the ballgame. It put the pressure on Cal. We probably wouldn't have scored the insurance touchdown if they hadn't been in a spot where they had to gamble."

"Did you block the kick, Dick?" Specs Cook looked at his roommate in surprise. He glanced at Flager. "How do you like that? A hero—and he never chirps to his own roommate! Heck, the guy broadcasting the game gave Kolo credit for blocking the kick."

Specs shoved his glasses higher on his nose and grimaced.

"I might have known that joker would have hashed it up!"

"Sportcasters have a tough job, chum," Flash Flager observed. "A game moves pretty fast. It's a tough racket."

"Nuts! What's so tough about it? They're up there in the pressbox with high-powered glasses. They've got spotters working with them for both teams."

Specs suddenly assumed a tense expression and threw into his voice a forced excitement.

Mudville U has the ball now on their own six-and-a-half-inch line! . . . Mudville's star, Joe Klotz, is in punt formation. . . . Will they punt? The score is 95 to 0, and this may be Mudville's last chance. . . . There's the snap from center . . . Klotz has the ball . . . it's a fake! He's away! . . . look at that boy go . . . hear this crowd! . . . Wait a second, Joe Klotz doesn't have the ball. . . . It's Harry Hoosis . . . Hoosis has the ball, and he's running wide. He's going . . . going . . . he goes all the way to the—yes sir, he goes all the way to the one-yard line—his own one-yard line!—before he is driven out of bounds. . . .

Specs snorted.

"That's the average sportcaster, making every play sound like a world beater—and usually getting it fouled up. Heck, maybe it was Dick that snagged that pass instead of Jensen."

Dick said quickly, "Don't be goony. It was Jensen, all right."

There was complete silence for a moment. Flash Flager was eyeing Dick. When he spoke, the sports writer's tone was elaborately careless.

"What's with you and Jensen, anyway, Dick?"

"What do you mean, what's with me and Jensen?" Dick looked sharply at the sports writer.

"Don't be like that, chum. Old Flash gets around. I mean you and Bart Jensen fit into the backfield together like two pieces of two different jigsaw puzzles. What's the story?"

"There isn't any story for a sportsheet!"

Flash Flager said, "A newspaperman doesn't print

everything he hears—or knows. This is off the record. Just happens that I'm a Michigan man. I've got more than a sports writer's interest.

"Steve Foster has material for a winner this year—but there has to be backfield smoothness. You don't have backfield smoothness unless you have all four men in—in—well, your dad would say *rapport*. You and Jensen are both Ann Arbor products. You were once teammates in high school. Yet Dick Thornley crumples and bungles when he's in there with Jensen. Why?"

Flash Flager waited a few seconds. Dick just stared at him. Specs Cook noted the gleam in his roommate's eyes and opened his mouth to forestall Flager, but the sports writer went on.

"Mike Flaherty has a trick shoulder. Steve figured on using Mike sparingly. Where are we going to be if something happens to Mike? You should be in there at the fullback spot in the offensive backfield. You have the potentialities of a real fullback. My hunch is that the sand in the gears is something between you and Bart Jensen. Right?"

Still Dick said nothing. His brown eyes were giving off sparks. Specs Cook was watching his roommate.

"He's ready to explode when his eyes get like that," Specs said. "Better . . ."

Flager cut through the words of Specs Cook as though he didn't hear them.

"Bart Jensen flunked a psychology course that he took last year with your dad. Jensen had to go to summer school in order to be eligible for football. Is that the rub? Your dad do Jensen dirt to sort of smooth things along for you?"

Suddenly Dick was on his feet. His eyes blazed brown fire, and his face was flushed with anger.

"That's a lie! A dirty, filthy lie! Jensen flunked because he didn't do the work of the course. My dad would never do a thing like that. You—you—you'd better go, Flager. I . . ."

"Take it easy, Dick," Specs interrupted. "Can't you see he's just needling you?"

Flash Flager rose from his chair. He surveyed Specs.

"Shrewd, chum," he said. "You can always get more of the lowdown when you get a fellow sore. No hard feeling, Thornley. I don't blame you for flaring up. Fact is, you answered some questions in my mind. I was wondering whether you had the spirit to fight back."

Flash Flager started for the door, turned before he went out.

"I told you this was all off the record," he said. "Don't worry about any of it being printed." Then to Specs Cook, "You're pretty sharp, chum. Maybe a guy like you can do a lot for Thornley. Work on him, will you?"

VII

In the Radio Booth

THE RADIO booths in the pressbox of Michigan Stadium had not been built for roomy comfort. Dick squeezed into the cramped space with Specs Cook. He was still surprised to find himself up there with his roommate, and he was beginning to wonder if Specs had sold him a bill of goods. The man at the microphone made a gesture of welcome to them without breaking the flow of words he was pouring forth.

“ . . . and we wish to express our appreciation to Del Gregon, Michigan Director of Publicity, and especially to the lads he dug up for us on a moment’s notice to act as spotters. They have just come into our booth. Specs Cook and Dick Thornley, say hello to the radio audience. . . .”

The sportcaster extended the mike toward Specs. He seemed to be paralyzed. He backed away from the shiny little metal oval. He looked beseechingly at Dick as he shoved his glasses higher on his nose and gulped. The radio man quickly switched the microphone to a position under Dick’s nose.

“Say something,” he said tensely. “Your pal has frozen. He’ll probably snap out of it if you say something.”

Dick was staring at Specs. Gosh, Specs hadn’t been

fooling when he pleaded with him to come along. He *looked* scared. Who would ever have thought that Specs Cook would have mike fright? Almost without conscious volition Dick spoke into the microphone.

"Hello, everybody. And a special 'hi' to mom and dad down in Columbus. Hope you're listening."

"That was Dick Thornley, ladies and gentlemen," the sportcaster said into the mike. "Dick Thornley, number two Michigan fullback. Dick is out of today's game on orders from Ben Benson, Michigan trainer, to rest a pulled muscle received in scrimmage this week, and we are fortunate to have Dick to act as Michigan spotter for us today. And now, ladies and gentlemen, here is our other spotter assistant, Specs Cook. . . ."

Specs seemed to have overcome the paralysis that had held him. "Hello, folks," he said into the microphone. "If I sound scared, it's because I am. It's different from what I thought, being up here and talking into this thing and realizing that perhaps thousands of people are listening. I guess I would have passed out a minute ago when it was shoved at me, if it hadn't been for Dick."

The regular announcer took over the mike.

"Thank you, Specs Cook," he said. "The teams are lining up for the kickoff, but in the few seconds left we can give you a little insight into the confusion that held in our booth the last few minutes, and you can understand our heartfelt relief at having Dick Thornley and Specs Cook up here.

"Our regular spotter for Michigan was seized with a very bad tummyache half an hour ago. We kidded him about eating too many of the hot dogs and partaking too freely of the soft drinks that Michigan provides gratis for

pressbox men. But the tummyache persisted. Del Gregon summoned a physician, and it was discovered that our assistant had acute appendicitis. He is on the way to University Hospital for an emergency operation—and our other spotter is with him. We just didn't have the heart to turn down our colleague's plea not to send him off to be carved without the moral support of a friend.

"That naturally left us in a hole. We appealed to Del Gregon, and our appeal was overheard by Flash Flager, Detroit sports writer. Flager remembered that he had heard a Michigan lad belittle sportcasters—imagine that!—a few nights ago. Flager believed that this lad would not have stage fright or mike fright or any kind of fright. That lad was Specs Cook, ladies and gentlemen. I'm making faces at him right now in revenge for his cracks about sportcasters.

"Del Gregon located Cook and learned that Dick Thornley was with his roommate, so both boys came, and we are very grateful to them. It is unexpected luck to have Thornley here to spot Michigan men for us, and I'm sure that Specs Cook will do a fine job spotting Wisconsin. There goes the referee's whistle, ladies and gentlemen. Justin moves forward and there's the kick. It goes to . . ."

The sportcaster's staccato voice poured into the microphone. Dick and Specs were kept busy pointing to and replacing on the little board the discs with the numbers of Michigan players and Wisconsin men on them. The board fascinated Dick.

The first half seemed to pass incredibly fast. Dick was suddenly aware that the sportcaster was giving Specs a bad time. Specs stared at the sportcaster incredulously.

"I have the impression," he said, "that you asked me to go on the air?"

"I did." The radio man grinned. "I understand you hold a very dim view of sportcasters. Here's your chance to show how easy it is. We'll have it back up here in a couple of minutes when the field mike is switched off after the band leaves. Go on, give the folks a re-cap of the first half. Give 'em anything. It's all yours. That's if you still believe a sportcaster has such a cinch!"

Specs looked frantically at Dick. Dick said calmly, "Go ahead, you can do it. You aren't going to let old Doc Cook be backed down, are you?"

Specs swallowed. "Okay," he croaked. "Say when."

In an incredibly short space of time the announcer pointed a forefinger at Specs, said, "She's all yours. Take it away."

Specs ran his tongue across lips that were suddenly dry. He looked at Dick. Suddenly the expression on Specs' face changed, and Dick knew his roommate was going to be all right when Specs scowled and snatched the microphone from the ledge.

"Hello again, folks," he said. "This is Specs Cook, one of the guys introduced to you before the game began. We're between halves now. The Michigan Marching Band is coming off the field after having given its usual dazzling performance. Speaking of dazzling performances, this Michigan team of ours has done a bit of dazzling of the Badgers from Wisconsin. As you know, the score is Michigan, 21; Wisconsin, 0. You've heard the play-by-play broadcast, so I won't go over the scoring.

"Until this moment, I've never been in a broadcasting

booth. I didn't have any clear idea of what one looks like. I imagine that most of you listeners don't know any more about one than I did, so I'm going to describe this one to you.

"Across the front of the booth is a shelf, built so high that the mike is right in front of the announcer's mouth when he sits on a stool. Besides the microphone there is also on this shelf a board with filed-off nails or something stuck in for the eleven positions of a football team. The nails are lettered to indicate the position. Left halfback, right halfback, center, fullback, and so on. There are just enough nails for two teams, facing each other.

"On each side of the board are numbered discs, corresponding to the numbers worn by players down on the field. As a man comes into the game, the spotter for that team places the man's number on the proper peg. In the action of the game, the spotter for that team points to the number of the man who carried the ball, made the tackle, threw the pass, made the block, or what have you. Dick Thornley did that for Michigan the first half, and I tried to keep up with the Wisconsin side."

Specs grinned at the sportcaster, winked at Dick.

"There are two mikes," Specs went on. "Why, the sportcaster doesn't even make the color remarks or the commercials! It's not so tough, folks. The spotters and the engineer up in back do all the work! Here is your regular announcer, folks."

The sportcaster chuckled as he took over the microphone.

"I asked for it, and Specs gave it to me," he said. "Congratulations, Specs. You were wonderful. You really gave the listening audience a clear picture. They're lining up

for the second-half kickoff, ladies and gentlemen. Michigan is receiving . . . offensive team is on the field . . . there goes the kick. . . .”

As the game progressed, Dick was aware that he was spotting Bart Jensen more and more frequently for the sportcaster. Bart Jensen was going as fast today as he had in the California game. Dick found himself thrilling to the sharp play of Jensen and then suddenly analyzing his feeling.

Doggone it, a fellow had to admit that Bart Jensen was good. They had once been teammates and—Dick was recalling words Flash Flager had said: *Dick Thornley crumples and bungles when he's in there with Jensen . . . you and Bart Jensen fit into the backfield together like two pieces of different jigsaw puzzles. Why?*

Well, doggone it, what was the answer? Jensen certainly fits into the backfield. But Jensen has no time for you. He just doesn't go for you, and if you're honest about it, you'll have to admit that you have a certain scorn for him.

How about the rest of the guys? How about Barry Shane and Pete Byrne and R. E. and Earl Crowe and Captain Kolo? How do they feel about you? Football is no patty cake game, a fellow has to stand on his own feet and show that he can take it and dish it out.

Why can't you have the confidence in Dick Thornley that you used to have? You're the same guy. Is it because deep down you're afraid that Bart Jensen is right? Have you leaned on your dad until—oh, nuts!

These thoughts were going through Dick's mind as he automatically spotted Michigan players during that second half. He was quiet as he and Specs left the pressbox after the profuse thanks from the sportcaster.

"Quite an experience," Specs said. "Good thing you had the old confidence to babble into that mike, Dick. You saved my life. Guess I'd have stood there like a mummy if you . . ."

"Break it off," Dick cut in sharply. "I'm sick of hearing you harp on confidence, confidence, confidence! Don't you think I . . ."

Dick stopped suddenly, drew in a breath.

"Sorry," he said. "But don't ladle out any more Doc Cook psychology, please. I don't think you were any part scared. You were giving my ego a subtle treatment, I suppose. Let's drop it. I'm in a rotten mood, I guess."

Specs gave his roommate a knowing glance. Dick did not look up so he missed the satisfaction in Specs' expression.

"You're wrong," Specs said. "I wasn't putting on a show. But I'm all for your being in a rotten mood. You make me hopeful that things are stirring."

VIII

Classroom Boner

“**T**HERE, HOW does that feel now, boy?”

Dick grinned up at Ben Benson from the training table. Ben called everybody “boy.” There was a story that Ben had once called the president of the University “boy” at a general faculty meeting and had been unable to understand the laugh that followed.

“Feels swell,” Dick said. “Better than new.”

The varsity trainer grunted. His long supple fingers were kneading the muscles of Dick’s thigh. They probed deep. Dick winced involuntarily as Ben’s fingers prodded a sensitive spot.

“Better’n new, huh?” Ben grunted. “You kids are all alike. If a man listened to you, you’d never have anything wrong. Then what would a poor trainer do? Guess we’d better give this leg a little more heat treatment. Fix yourself over there at the whirlpool tub, boy, so the leg is completely immersed.”

It was no easy task to drape oneself over the tub so that one’s upper leg was in the water. But this whirlpool bath felt good. Some arrangement in the pipes forced air through the water and thus enabled more heat to be applied. Dick was draped over the tub in such a way

that he could see only the end wall of the varsity training room.

A long string of pictures stretched across the end wall, pictures of Michigan men who had been chosen All Americans. Every position on a team was represented by several different choices. There were more than enough Michigan All Americans to fill three teams. The final picture was of Captain Kolo. Marion Frances Kolodzieczyk was his full name. He'd made All American last year at guard.

As always, following the most recent Michigan All American selection, there was a blank frame at the end with the current year's date over it and a big question mark inside the frame. Who would fill that frame this year? Kolo again? Might be. Barry Shane? Shane played tackle. Maybe Earl Crowe.

Perhaps it would be more than one man, and of course there was even the possibility that there might not be a single Michigan man chosen All American. But dating from 1903, when the immortal Willie Heston had been selected as an All American halfback, there had been fewer years without a Michigan selection than years with at least one Wolverine on the mythical team. Some years more than one Michigan man had been honored.

"All right, boy," Ben said after a time. "Climb back on the table. We don't want to cook you. We'll just give that leg a stiff massage and see how it feels."

The trainer's long fingers worked at the muscles. They felt good. More to make conversation than anything else, Dick asked the trainer a question.

"You train all sports, Ben. Which is the toughest for injuries?"

"Well, boy, I'll tell you: any of the contact sports, the way American kids play them, can be tough. 'Course, proper conditioning and proper equipment minimize the risk of injury, but when boys are traveling top speed on a basketball court, or slamming down the ice in a hockey game, or tearing after a hit ball or running bases in a baseball game—well, something sometimes has to give.

"I guess that by and large football has the bulk of the injuries. There are more men involved in contact for greater periods of time for one thing. But, heck, boy, you can get hurt bad anyplace. Take Mike Flaherty now. Mike's played football since he was in first year high school and never got more than a bruise or maybe a cleat scrape. Then this summer he gets a shoulder separation when he falls off the watching tower while he's acting as lifeguard at a beach!"

Ben Benson gave Dick's thigh a final pat, told him that was all the treatment for the time being, and asked him to drop in that afternoon before the game movie. Dick pulled on his clothes.

"Just goes to show you," the trainer went on "like I always say, if you're gonna get banged up, you're gonna get banged up."

"What is to be, will be, eh? Ben, you're a fatalist."

"You get to be in this business, boy. I could tell you of dozens of instances when a man was smashed by a vicious block or tackle when he was tense and practically helpless and got up from the crash none the worse. Then I could give you as many more cases when a man fell over his own shoelaces and got a broken bone, or twisted knee, or something. Only thing you can do is to give it all you have all the time and have confidence that if you do that

and the other fellow doesn't, he'll be the one to come out on the short end."

Dick mulled over the trainer's words as he walked up State Street toward the campus. Ben Benson was quite a philosopher in his way. But was his philosophy sound? Oh, sure, a fellow should be in there with all he had all the time, but how about Dick Thornley and Bart Jensen? Where was the . . . ?

"Hi, Dick! Wait a sec."

The shout from across the street cut into Dick's thoughts. He stopped and waited for R. E. Lee. As the big center came up, Dick said, "How goes it this morning, Robert Edward?"

R. E. gave him a pained look. "And I figured you were a friend of mine," he said. "I've told you guys a thousand times that my name is R. E. That's all the name I've got. And my folks did not name me after General Robert Edward Leel"

Dick suppressed a chuckle. That name and the publicity joke made R. E. react quickly. It was fun to hear his soft Southern drawl when he was excited.

"Not that I'd be ashamed of it," R. E. added. "I'm proud to be a Virginian, and Robert Edward Lee is a big name in our part of the country. But it riles me to be called out of my name. Riles me, I say."

Then R. E. asked, "How's the leg? Ben cook out the soreness?"

"I guess so. It doesn't bother me. I could have played Saturday."

"Maybe so, but Ben knows his stuff. You didn't miss much anyway. Wisconsin just didn't have the manpower.

That 21-0 score could have been doubled if Steve had wanted to pour it on. Boy, that Jensen was really hot, huh? Really hot, I say."

Dick said in a rather flat tone, "He played a good ball-game."

R. E. looked at him. Dick did not notice the peculiar expression of the varsity center's eyes. R. E. changed the subject.

"Got your calc? That's a foolish question though. You always have the stuff." R. E. let out an exaggerated sigh. "Must be wonderful to have brains."

"Oh, I don't know about that. I put in plenty of time on calculus."

"Time! Mr. Thornley, you don't know what putting in time on calculus is! I drag my weary carcass to the room after we eat, and I start right in on the blamed stuff. Comes the witching hour of midnight, and everybody in the house has gone to bed. But in Lee's room a big, dumb ox is tearing out his hair, likely still working on the first problem. I take the blamed book to bed with me, and it's the first thing I look at in the morning, but I still don't get the stuff."

R. E.'s face was gloomy. He barely acknowledged greetings from several men who passed. He let out a long groan as they entered West Engineering, where the calculus class met.

"They don't list this course right," he muttered. "The schedule calls it Mathematics 53, but they oughta call it Moan and Gripe 2. Moan and Gripe 2, I say."

The professor lectured for approximately half the period. He called on students to explain problems that had been

assigned the day before. He came finally to a problem that two men in a row did not solve, and then he called on R. E.

The varsity center stood, drawled, "I'd better confess. I don't have a single one of the problems. Not a single one, I say." He sat down.

Bart Jensen was the next to be called. Jensen stood up, ran his fingers through his stubby dark hair. There was no swagger about him as he stumbled haltingly in his attempted explanation of the problem. Finally he muttered something under his breath, raised his gaze from the paper and said, "I don't seem to be able to untangle this mess I have."

A titter rippled through the class, stilled abruptly under the instructor's sharp look. He said softly, "Perhaps you have the next exercise?"

"No, sir."

The instructor raised his brows. He asked Jensen if he had any of the remaining problems. The answer was again negative.

"Ah, may I ask whether you did *any* of the assignment, Mr. Jensen? Even football men are expected to do *part* of the work."

The room was suddenly very quiet. Men were throwing sullen glances at the professor. This line of talk resembled "athlete baiting." Jensen straightened, and the swagger was back in his squared shoulders.

"I did the best I could with the assignment," he said. "It doesn't seem exactly fair to put football men in a special category!"

He sat down. Dick Thornley looked across the room at Jensen. The big stupe! But he did have to admire the

fellow's spunk. Some profs delighted in embarrassing athletes. He had heard his father sputter about this more than once and call it a kind of psychological compensation on the part of professors. Dad would surely never have done a thing like this, though.

Another football man was called. And still another. Dick was squirming restlessly in his seat. Oddly enough, he was not thinking of R. E. and the others, only of Jensen. Jensen had criticized him because a U High teacher had warned him he was flunking geometry. Now Jensen tacitly admitted that he wasn't doing so well in calculus. Well . . .

"Mr. Thornley, suppose you have a go at upholding the prestige of the football men?"

The professor interrupted Dick's thoughts. Dick had the answer to the problem. He thought only of showing up Bart Jensen. He stood and gave an almost flawless explanation of the troublesome exercise.

It was near the end of the hour. The instructor had gone back to a droning lecture on the application of certain formulas. R. E. sat there beside Dick, staring morosely ahead. Usually he moved restlessly. The professor came to a section of his lecture that needed illustration, and while he was erasing a spot on the blackboard, Dick looked curiously at R. E.

"What's struck you?" Dick asked. "You claim this is your Moan and Gripe class—then you crawl into a shell like a contented oyster, and not a teeny moan or gripe out of you for half an hour. How come?"

R. E. gave him a peculiar look.

"Maybe I'm suffering in silence. Was that necessary, Dick?"

"Was what necessary?"

R. E. continued to look at him with an odd expression. Then the big center shook his head.

"Guess you don't really know, at that," he said. "Was it necessary to reel off that problem the way you did?"

Dick stared at him. "Well, for gosh sakes," he said. "I had the problem, why shouldn't I have reeled it off?"

"Maybe it's better not to be so brainy sometimes, Dick. Showing up all of us to satisfy something you've got against Jensen—well, I don't know. Dick. I don't know, I say."

IX

Northwestern Game Blow-up

“**A**LL RIGHT, all right, let's have some drive . . . oh, spizzola! Not like that, Thornley, you've got to *slant!* Slant, *slant*, SLANT! How many times does a man have to tell you backs that as you break through into the opening you slant!”

Labbie Labadie glared at the quartet of backfield men with whom he was working. He was almost jumping up and down. He grabbed a football, tucked it under his arm, drove four or five strides as though he were going into a hole in the line, cut over sharply, and slanted away from Dick.

“That's what I mean by not giving a tackler a full shot at you,” Labadie said. “All right, Pete. Run it again.”

Dick swiped his jersey sleeve across his sweaty forehead. Labadie had no mercy. He'd been an All American halfback in his undergraduate days, and he could still rip and tear, so that he expected his men to step right out and do the same. But he was right. Labadie had hinted strongly that Dick Thornley might get a chance to go in the offensive fullback spot against Northwestern.

Dick held grimly to that hope through three days of slogging work. In the weekly scrimmage session he was

in as fullback part of the time while the varsity polished new plays that Steve and his staff had prepared for Northwestern. In the dressing room at Dyche Stadium before the squad went out there on the field, Labadie flatly assured Dick that Steve would send him in there as offensive fullback sometime during the game.

The butterflies inside him were big as sparrows as Dick trotted out for the pre-game warmup.

Dyche Stadium was packed to capacity. It was a noisy, enthusiastic crowd. People in downtown Chicago could probably have heard the noise from Evanston if they had listened for it.

Northwestern wore white jerseys with purple stripes around the sleeves about elbow length. Their squad was warming up at the north end of the field. Their headcoach had been a lineman in his playing days. He had the Northwestern linemen on the goal line now, charging when he moved a ball on the ground to simulate a center's snap. Five cheerleaders in purple sweaters and white trousers exhorted the west stands to cheer.

U—rah—rah—rah
U—North—west—ern
U—rah—rah—rah
U—North—west—ern
U—rah—rah—rah
U—North—west—ern
Yea, team!

The Northwestern locomotive boomed across the field. Michigan cheerleaders immediately yelled direction through their megaphones. "The speller! The speller! Everybody got it? The speller. Show 'em how a real yell sounds! One! Two! Yell!"

M—M—M—M
I—I—I—I
C—C—C—C
H—H—H—H
Yea, Michigan
Fight! Team! Fight!

The volume of sound could not compare with that from the Northwestern side. Down on the field where the Michigan squad was loosening up, Barry Shane looked at the crowded east stands.

"If they're all Wolverines up there," Shane commented, "they oughta make more noise than that."

"They're mostly Michigan, all right," Mike Flaherty said. "Michigan has a big alumni in the Chicago area. But that's the tipoff: they're mostly alumni. They're a little rusty in their yelling. Wait'll they get warmed up."

"Looks as though at least one of them is warmed up now." Dick Thornley nodded toward the sideline. "There is one alumnus who is getting back the old college spirit."

A portly man had piled out of the stands. He shucked off his topcoat, then peeled off his suitcoat. He rolled up his shirtsleeves and grabbed a megaphone from a varsity cheerleader.

"Why don't you mugs yell!" he roared through the megaphone. "Forget you're a bunch of pot-bellied, middle-aged monkeys! You're college guys for today. Let's hear you give out with a real old-time Yea, Michigan!"

The portly gentleman threw the megaphone away, held up one finger, then two, then went into a surprisingly good imitation of a cheerleader as he flung his legs wide, squatted, and spread his hands horizontal to the ground.

Yea-a-a Michigan
Yea-a-a Michigan
Yea-a-a Michigan
Fight! Fight! Fight!

The impromptu cheerleader clapped his hands above his head in a gesture of applause, picked up the megaphone, and bellowed through it.

"Sam Blowers, a varsity cheerleader more years ago than I care to remember! Thanks for a darn good response. Now let's give these kids who are here today to lead our cheering the same kind of vocal support!"

The varsity cheerleaders crowded around Sam Blowers, shook his hand, thumped him on the back. Steve Foster made a sign, and the Michigan squad trotted toward the dressing room. Dick was thinking about that little scene. Michigan did something to you. It stuck after you'd been gone from the campus a good many years. It was more than just yelling at a football game, too.

As usual, Steve Foster made no long speech in the dressing room.

"Northwestern will be tough," Steve said. "They're always tough. We've gone over the scouting reports, and you have been shown typical Northwestern formations and plays. Be alert. Play the game you can, that's all we ask. All right, everybody out."

Lineup for the kickoff. Northwestern had won the toss and elected to receive. Dick felt the butterflies in his stomach. Would the time ever come when he didn't experience that fluttery feeling just before the first play? The referee blew his whistle. The line of yellow pants and blue jerseys swung forward with Bob Justin.

"Go get 'em, gang . . . who makes the tackle? . . . the

old fight, Dick . . . mow 'em down, you guys. . . ."

The usual pepper talk from squad members not in the opening lineup. Bunched at the sideline before the Michigan bench, yelling encouragement. *Plunk!* Bob Justin's kickoff was kicked from a flat lie, low and twisting and nasty to handle. The ball ricocheted off the leg of one Northwestern man, but another grabbed it and started upfield.

R. E., Dick, and Barry Shane saw to it that the Northwestern man did not go far. The referee placed the ball on the twenty-six and said, "First and ten."

Michigan lined up in defensive formation. A 5-3-2-1 today. Steve and Heavy had decided from scouting reports that a five-man line could best cope with the Northwestern attack. They owned a sound ground game, but their strength was in passing.

Northwestern snapped from the huddle into a T. The quarterback faked a handoff to a halfback cutting past, then retreated five steps fast. R. E. yelled. "Pass! Pass! Watch a pitch!"

Michigan men covered eligible receivers as they sifted into the secondary. Dick tacked onto an end cutting diagonally across his zone. He kept between the end and the goal line, went up into the air with the Northwestern man at the forty-five-yard stripe. It was Dick's fingers that reached the ball and batted it out of bounds.

"The Sophomore Sockeroo, huh," the Northwestern man said as he and Dick picked themselves off the ground and trotted back. "You messed that one up, all right, but I gotta hunch it was an accident." He grinned then and added casually. "We got the word that you come apart at the seams when the heat is on!"

Dick eyed the Northwestern man. From the corner of his eye he saw that Bart Jensen was watching him. Oddly enough, it was against Jensen, not the Northwestern man, that Dick's irritation turned. Be just like the guy to have tipped Northwestern to ride him. Now wait a sec, Thornley. Northwestern scouts were in the pressbox the day you went sour under Michigan State needling.

"The way to go, kid. . . . Nice coverin', Dick. Nice coverin', I say. . . ."

Dick heard the praise from Barry Shane and R. E., but it did little to settle the tension that was abruptly in him.

Northwestern drove at Shane's tackle. The big blond handfought the blockers, drifted with the interference, forced the play wide. Dick hit the ball carrier at practically the same time that Shane slipped a block and slammed into him. The play made a yard. The Northwestern man said, "Pretty lucky, Thornley. Enjoy it while you can. Today's the day when Sockeroo gets changed to Floperool"

Dick forced a grin. "You guys are comedians," he said. "Drop around any time!"

Barry Shane whacked him on the shoulder. "That's the way to handle these jockeys," Shane said. "Give 'em a rough ride and they'll lay off."

Somebody missed a tackle on the third play. The Northwestern scatback was all but away. It was Bart Jensen and Dick who finally knocked him out of bounds. The Northwestern man jabbed at Dick as they got off the turf.

"Did your dad use his drag to get Foster to start you today, Thornley? It won't be long now!"

Dick saw Bart Jensen look quickly at him. Dick stared at the Northwestern man. These men were planning to give him a bad time, all right. He opened his mouth to say

retort, saw Jensen's curious expression, wheeled around without saying anything.

Okay, you wiseacres, he thought. Play that record until it wears out. You're not getting me down today! He was violently angry now.

The headlinesman brought the chains out from the sideline to measure. The ball was a foot short of first down. Would the Wildcats gamble this early? They might. Dick glanced toward the sideline. Steve Foster must be wondering, too. The offensive replacements were crouched before the Michigan bench, but Steve was not sending them in. Dick edged a few yards deeper.

Northwestern did not gamble. It was a punt—a beauty that angled out of bounds on the Michigan eighteen. The offensive replacements came in.

Dick crouched in front of the Michigan bench and glued his gaze to Mike Flaherty. The snapback came to Mike direct from center. He spun smoothly, masked the ball, tossed a lateral to Bart Jensen shooting the opposite way.

Dick let out a breath. Why couldn't Dick Thornley acquire the same smoothness? He could—if he had the old confidence. He is good on defense, even when those men pour it on him. And on offense if . . .

He broke off his thoughts. Northwestern had the wingback reverse well scouted. They had not been fooled by Mike's fake. They ganged Jensen after a two-yard gain.

Pete Byrne sent Mike into the line on the same arrangement, but this time Mike retained the ball and completed the spinner. He rammed into a Northwestern line backer when he had barely emerged through the opening at guard. Third down and six.

Northwestern talked it up, chattered fight talk. They

lived up to their name of Wildcats in their charge. They smothered Earl Crowe on a wide sweep, and Michigan had to kick.

As he trotted out to replace Mike, Dick wondered if those first two series of downs were to set the pattern for that game. As the quarter wore along with neither team able to put together more than two consecutive first downs, it looked very much as though they had.

"This ole ballgame is gonna be won by the gang that whips the other defense down," R. E. opined. "We're gonna win it. You guys just keep luggin' that leather tomato, and pretty soon we'll tame these Wildcats down to tabby cats! Tabby cats, I say!"

The Wildcats did not neglect the needle work on Dick. "Your luck's running out, Thornley. . . . The sock is fading from the so-called Sophomore Sockerool . . . Your old man's connections won't get you by out here. . . ."

Dick just grinned at the needlers. Why, doggone, these guys could rave right on! He was making more than his share of tackles. They weren't getting anywhere with that wise chatter.

The second quarter was virtually a carbon copy of the first period for about eight minutes. Then, with the abruptness that makes football unpredictable, came one of those lightning turning points.

Northwestern had possession of the ball on their own forty. They pitched a third down pass. Michigan forwards rushed the passer. A blue-jerseyed arm jabbed at the ball as it left the passer's hand and the ball was deflected, spun crazily in the air. It came down right into the hands of R. E. Lee.

The big center clutched it instinctively, lumbered ahead.

Suddenly he looked frightened, swiveled his gaze frantically around, seeking somebody to whom he could lateral the ball. He started to toss the oval to Barry Shane.

"Keep it!" Shane yelled. "Run, you big moose! I'll block for you!"

Shane cut down the Northwestern passer with a rolling block. The passer was the only Wildcat who had a chance to reach R. E. The center plowed across the yard marks. He plowed right into the end zone and on through it. It looked as though he were going to plow right up into the temporary bleachers that were set up behind the end zone.

Then R. E. realized that he had scored a touchdown. He did an exultant dance, yelled loudly. Suddenly he stopped. A little man with a camera and the word "Press" marked on a card in his hatband pointed a camera at R. E. from just outside the end zone. R. E. rushed at him, heaved the football straight at the camera, and the little man went over backward as his flash bulb flared.

"You can't take a picture of me," R. E. yelled. "You can't do it, I say!"

The little man backed away, stared wide-eyed at R. E. "You nuts, or something?" he said. "Take it easy, the shot wasn't any good anyway."

Teammates surrounded R. E. and edged him away from the photographer. Barry Shane shook his head in wonder.

"I don't get it," Shane said. "Frankly, I figured this publicity-avoiding phobia of yours was half put on. I don't get it."

R. E. said, "I don't want publicity, I don't want my picture on sportsheets all over the country." That was the only explanation he would give.

Perhaps the center's perturbation was the reason for his low pass to Pete Byrne on the conversion try. Pete hurriedly set the ball, but Justin missed his first conversion try of the season. The ball was low and under the cross-bar.

Michigan, 6; Northwestern, 0.

"My fault, Jus," R. E. said. "But think nothin' of it. We've got these guys whipped down. It's only the beginning, only the begin—ning, I say!"

R. E. proved to be a good prophet. Justin kicked off, another flat, bounding kick. The ball hit a Northwestern lineman. Not accustomed to handling kicked balls, the lineman fozzled the kick, juggled the ball, reached for it, kicked it, and three Michigan men dove on the bounding oval.

Michigan scored on one perfect play.

Earl Crowe carried, and everything turned out like a coach's dream. Earl swung toward the flank, slanted back through a huge hole between tackle and left guard, slipped a hasty tackle try just through the line, and from there on blockers scythed a clear path. Not a Northwestern man was on his feet when Earl crossed the goal line.

It was almost the end of the half, and Northwestern grew a little desperate in their effort to score. They threw passes on every down. Dick intercepted a heave on the Northwestern forty-two. He examined the pattern of tacklers. Down the right lane there were only two men who might stop him. He churned over the turf.

"Cut in, cut in!" a voice behind him yelled.

Dick swerved. Barry Shane hurled his bulk into the first tackler. The second one never materialized. A good tie-up block by Captain Kolo was the reason. Dick raced

into the end zone and suddenly felt warm and good and wonderful.

He had scored his first Michigan touchdown!

Justin converted the point after touchdown, and Michigan left the field for halftime intermission on the happy end of a 20-0 score.

In the dressing room just before the team returned for the second-half kickoff, Steve Foster gave Dick the crowning accolade.

"Labadie says you're ready," Steve said. "You're starting this half at offensive fullback." The headcoach held Dick's gaze, then added, "You've earned it. Confound it, you're going to be out there from now on—unless you force me to yank you out. You should be there a long time, Dick."

Butterflies again. Worse than ever. Worrisome doubts at the edges of Dick's thoughts. He knew he'd have to forget them. He could do it. Those men would needle him, sure—but he could take it as he had in the first half.

Northwestern did needle him. They began on the first play after the kickoff.

"Your old man must have been a college days buddy-buddy of Foster. . . . That runback you lucked must have gone to Foster's head. . . . This is gonna be fun. I always wanted to see what made a teacher's pet tick! . . ."

Dick Thornley bungled a spin-buck on the third play, a first down chance was lost, and Michigan had to punt.

Dick was bitter only at himself. Men on the other team were in there trying to outsmart and outplay him. He took any advantage that was fair and so did they. Why was the needling bothering him now? He'd taken it the first half. What was the matter?

Dick berated himself. The needling went on, redoubled. Michigan's offense sputtered and misfired, and men looked queerly at Dick in the huddles. The Wolverines did not come close to a scoring threat during the third quarter. It was midway of the final period when the blowup came.

Michigan had possession of the ball on their own fifteen. Pete Byrne called for the wingback reverse off a fake spinner. He had to make it good, Dick told himself. He had to show the team that he could. He had to make it good to get back his confidence.

He gave himself desperate fight talk. Deep down he was fearful that the old unsureness would ruin him again.

The snapback came from R. E. perfectly. There was no alibi. He drove forward, stopped, pivoted. He started his handoff to Jensen, and the ball felt awkward in his hand. He half-juggled it. In a panic he knew that his timing was off, and he jabbed the ball at Jensen and knew that it was no good. Jensen did not have control of the ball when a Northwestern man crashed through and hit him. The ball squirted from Jensen's grasp.

Northwestern recovered the fumble on the Michigan nine-yard line.

Bart Jensen stood spread-legged before Dick. Jensen's dark eyes were full of scorn.

"You did that deliberately," he charged. "To make me look bad!"

Dick stared, dumbfounded. All the bitter frustration in him suddenly boiled over. Afterward he had no recollection of his thoughts at the time. His balled fist shot out without conscious volition and collided with Jensen's jaw. Bart Jensen staggered backward a step. Then his own

fists clenched, and his dark eyes flashed. Captain Kolo was instantly between them.

"Fine!" Kolo barked. "Beautiful! This'll look swell in the sportsheets! Either one of you make another move toward the other, and there'll be an added bit about Michigan's captain laying out a couple of feather-brained jerks!"

Dick was suddenly miserable. "Sorry," he muttered. "I—I . . ."

A hand touched his shoulder. It was Mike Flaherty. The Irish youth had raced from the bench. He said, "You're out, Thornley. Steve said you'd better go directly to the showers."

X

Headcoach Steve Foster Has a Word

STIEVE FOSTER sat back of the long desk in his office and eyed the two boys before him. There was no levity in the eyes of the headcoach as his gaze shifted alternately from Bart Jensen to Dick Thornley.

"I want to make it perfectly clear to both of you," Steve said. "This is not a matter I can laugh off, or ignore. We do our best to teach you fellows to play hard, clean football, and we certainly do not expect or want any of our boys to be sissies. We do expect them, however, to be gentlemen.

"In the heat of contact sports it is sometimes difficult to control one's temper, but control is one of the benefits to be derived from sports. Michigan needs the services of you fellows, but there never was an indispensable man anywhere. Michigan would go on fielding a football team if the equipment of Thornley and Jensen was taken up."

Steve Foster stopped speaking for the space of a few seconds. His penetrating eyes never left the faces of the boys.

"A team of the prominence of Michigan is always living more or less in a goldfish bowl. We cannot afford to have such happenings as occurred Saturday—and we are going to tolerate no more such, of that I can assure you.

"I deliberately refrained from seeing either of you fellows until I had allowed myself a couple of days to think things over. Also, I have talked with several other squad members. I believe I have a very fair picture of this crazy feud between you. I could demand that it end right here—and I do demand that it end as far as any future outbreak that may do harm to Michigan football is concerned.

"However, you are men. You should have a degree of maturity. It would serve no purpose for you to shake hands and declare superficially that all was forgiven and forgotten. I do not ask you to be mentally dishonest."

Again the headcoach stopped speaking, studied the two boys. Finally he spoke to Dick.

"Do you have anything to say?"

Dick swallowed. There was plenty he wanted to say. His brain was a whirl of confused thoughts. He looked his coach squarely in the eyes.

"I did a fool thing," he said. "I—I can't explain why I did it. I'm not trying to alibi and I truly am sorry. It—it—nothing like that will happen again."

Steve Foster nodded briefly, turned his gaze to Jensen, asked, "And you?"

Bart Jensen's face was a puzzle. He scowled and his gaze shifted from Dick to the coach.

"I don't know," he said. "You want us to be honest, and I can't honestly say that Thornley has been elevated to a bosom buddy just because he took a sock at me. I *can* honestly say, however, that I realize that I was wrong in what I thought. I'm sorry I busted out as I did."

Silence held the room. Neither boy made a move to offer his hand. Finally Steve Foster let out a breath.

"That seems to be all," he said. "Neither one of you is

to do any talking in case newspapermen approach you. Refer them to me, or to Del Gregon. There might be repercussions."

That Steve Foster knew what he was talking about became very clear to Dick in the next two days. A newspaperman phoned him long distance from Chicago and demanded that he be given the lowdown on "internal dissension on the Michigan squad." He was quite sympathetic to Dick until Dick convinced him that only Steve Foster or Michigan's publicity director would make any comment.

Flash Flager called in person at Dick's room. Flager did not pry.

"Look, chum," Flager said. "I know more about this nutty thing than you and Jensen put together. I wouldn't print a line of it. I just want to tip you off to keep your mouth shut to *anybody* who even looks as if he could *read* a newspaper!"

There were veiled references in several sportsheet columns that Michigan's Wolverines were scrapping among themselves. The *Michigan Daily* wisely—and probably at the behest of Steve Foster or Del Gregon—made no reference to the affair at Evanston.

Captain Kolo gave blunt warning to the whole squad in the varsity dressing room after Wednesday practice.

"You guys have a right to figure anything you choose," Kolo said. "There never was an argument or dispute that didn't have two sides. But it's no good for us to take sides and get everything fouled up."

Kolo did not mention Dick or Jensen, but everybody knew to whom he was referring.

"Aw, nuts," Barry Shane said as he, Dick, R. E., and Earl

Crowe walked up State Street toward the Union. "I say it's a good thing you socked Jensen. You oughta done it long ago. I haven't anything in particular against him, but I've heard Jensen hand out some pretty barbed stuff to you."

"I'm not in favor of anything that's going to hurt the team," R. E. said. "I'm sure this thing goes deeper than shows on the surface. But I've been in there with Dick when the other guys were hammering us plenty, and he's always put out the best he had. Not takin' sides or anything, you're still in there pitching, Dick. In there pitching, I say."

Dick said, "Thanks, fellows. The last thing I want is to create any tension. I—I guess Steve never'll give me another chance at the fullback job, and there's no use saying that the job isn't what I want more'n anything else. But it's okay. I—well, I guess those Northwestern guys were pretty good prophets when they told me that Sock-eroo would be changed to Floperoo."

"Aw, nuts, forget it."

"Keep your chin up, I say."

Earl Crowe said quietly, "Things have a way of working out, Dick. A fellow just has to hang tough and give it the best he has."

But there was no denying that, as the day approached nearer and nearer when Illinois would roll into Michigan Stadium for the Homecoming game, Michigan's squad showed a tenseness and uneasiness that boded no good for a smooth performance. Dick felt it. Miserably he held himself mainly responsible. But he was puzzled when Captain Kolo came to him the afternoon before the big alumni-squad get-together scheduled for that Thursday

night and told him that he was going to help in a stunt that Kolo thought might ease the tension.

"I'm going to call on you tonight," Kolo said.

"Mel" Dick was suddenly frightened. "Golly, I can't make a speech! I—what do you want me to do?"

"Not make a speech. When I call on you, just say that you give the floor over to R. E."

"What's it all about? What is the stunt?"

"You'll find out. Just do what I say, that's all."

Kolo would say no more. Dick's puzzlement had largely turned to apprehension by the time he arrived at the Michigan Union for the get-together with the alumni.

XI

Captain Kolo Pulls a Rib

“**A**ND I TELL YOU, chums, you’ll get a terrific boot out of the kid’s panic.” Flash Flager finished giving instructions to a group of fellow-alumni. “The big boy is the original shy-away-from-publicity lad.”

Dick overheard Flager as he entered the Union lounge. He knew in a minute that the sports writer was planning a trick on R. E. Lee. He wanted to see R. E. first. He wanted to know what Kolo and R. E. had planned. He saw the varsity center come up the steps into the lobby and started toward him, but Flager and his crowd surrounded R. E. first.

They all had wads of copy paper—provided by Flager—and poised pencils. They shot a barrage of questions at R. E.

“You’re Lee, aren’t you? My paper wants an interview with you on the subject of How Do Conference Centers Vary? . . . How does it feel to score a touchdown? Are you the first Michigan center to ever score in a Conference game? . . . From what Indian tribe did you learn that dance you did Saturday? . . . Do you object if we send out this feature over a wire service? . . .”

“Yes! Yes, I say, I object!” R. E. looked around fran-

tically for means of escape. They had him surrounded. He appealed to Flager, who stood in the background. "Get these guys away!" he begged. "Stop 'em! You know I don't want publicity. I can't, I say! Get 'em away!"

The phony reporters continued to badger him. R. E. looked desperate. Finally he hunched his heavy shoulders and rammed straight through. The alumni were chuckling and still pelting questions at him as R. E. fled toward the dining room. He was saved by a call that dinner was served.

Dick sighed. He would have liked to talk to R. E. He was so worried that he scarcely knew what he ate as the meal progressed. Finally Del Gregon stood and tapped a spoon against his water glass for attention.

"And now, gentlemen," Gregon said, "since we are full of good food, we should be able to withstand a few thousand words. Personally, I want to express my appreciation to the alumni. I know I speak for the coaching staff and for the squad. This is a marvelous idea. I hope that a get-together such as this becomes an annual highlight of Homecoming Week."

The publicity director puffed out his cheeks, unconsciously smoothed a hand over his thinning hair as his gaze traveled around the long table at which the football squad and the coaches were seated.

"Gentlemen, I give you the best football coach in the country, and the finest gentleman of them all," Gregon said. "I give you Headcoach Steve Foster!"

The applause was tremendous. Steve finally lifted a hand for silence. He smiled.

"Thank you," he said simply. "Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Thank you, Del, for those very kind

words. However, I doubt that I can meet the buildup you gave me. I doubt that I know 'a few thousand words,' and I am quite sure that the boys would not care to hear repeated here the few dozen that I keep hammering at them."

Steve waited for the appreciative laugh to die down.

"Some of you alumni know some of the boys," he went on. "But for the benefit of those of you who are not familiar with our squad personnel—and to spare you the dull oratory that would result if I attempted to make a speech—I am going to ask that each member of the squad stand and introduce himself. I hope that they will tell you where they hail from, what position they play, and their year in the University."

The headcoach nodded toward the end of the table where Kolo sat.

"Starting with Captain Kolo," Steve finished.

Kolo stood. "My name is Kolo. I'm from Gary, Indiana. I'm a Senior, and I play left guard." He sat down amid the applause from alumni.

They went around the table.

"Mike Flaherty, second varsity year . . . fullback . . . senior rating on the campus due to a year spent at Chicago Y.M.C.A. College."

"Bill Manner . . . Cleveland . . . Junior . . . end."

"Pete Byrne . . . New York . . . Junior . . . half-back . . ."

It came the turn of a large youth with wavy blond hair and blue eyes that sparkled with devilment. Whitey Donnels had demonstrated in freshman year his irrepressible cockiness. That he owned a sense of humor as well was demonstrated when Whitey rose.

"I'm Whitey Donnels," he said. "I'm probably the best left tackle any Detroit high school ever turned out! I'm a Sophomore."

Whitey paused with an instinctive sense of timing. He looked down the table and inclined his head toward Barry Shane.

"I would undoubtedly be a regular on any other team," Whitey said. "Why, I actually got in the ballgame for three minutes at Evanston in place of Shanel!"

He waited for the laugh. He got it. There was something likeable about this youngster. His words had the sound of an insufferable egotist, but they carried no such connotation as Whitey said them.

"Gentlemen," he finished, his eyes snapping. "You are now looking at Michigan's regular left tackle for the rest of the season!"

He sat down. The alumni roared. His teammates chuckled, cast looks at Barry Shane. Dick thought: boy, wait'll Barry's turn comes!

They went on around the table. Gross . . . Jensen . . . Lee . . . King . . . Crowe. . . Every man was applauded. Dick sat next to Barry Shane. Dick introduced himself. Someone at a back table shouted, "The Sophomore Sockerool!" The alumni had read Flash Flager's feature article. Their applause warmed Dick. Then Barry Shane rose. He spoke easily.

"Barry Shane, from Boston," he said. "I'm a Junior." Then he turned so that he faced Whitey Donnels. "And, for the benefit of this white-haired Detroit darling, *I'm* playing regular left tackle for Michigan this year. If he is a nice boy—and more retiring—I *might* use my influence

with Heavy Carr to allow him enough time to earn a letter!"

A vagrant thought drifted across the back of Dick's mind. It would be wonderful to be as sure of oneself as Barry Shane and Whitey Donnels were.

Finally all of the squad had introduced themselves. Then Kolo stood up before Del Gregon had a chance to go on with the program. The team captain's face was entirely serious.

"Mr. Gregon," Kolo said, "perhaps this is not the place for the request I am going to make. On the other hand, perhaps it is the very best place. We are all Michigan men. I am sure that what is said or done here will not go beyond the confines of these walls."

Kolo stopped a moment. A sudden quiet gripped the room. Men looked questioningly at each other. Kolo was very solemn.

"There have been rumors," Kolo said, "that all is not well with the team."

A pin dropping in the Michigan Union dining room would have made a tremendous clatter.

"This is as good a place as any to let down our hair," Kolo said, "and get any gripes off our chests."

He looked around the table at the stunned squad and coaches. Del Gregon was puffing out his cheeks, trying to signal Kolo. The varsity captain paid no heed whatever to Gregon, or to the obviously worried Steve Foster.

"I call on Dick Thornley," Kolo said, and nodded toward Dick. "You have the floor."

Dick stood up. The impact of eyes from his teammates was almost physical. He knew that he was flushing. He

also knew that he had only to say the few words that Kolo had instructed him to say. Instead, he found himself saying something that he had not planned at all.

"I have no gripe," he said clearly. "If anything, the gripe is the other way." Then he abruptly realized that Kolo had counted on his saying something like that. The captain held up one hand and made a circle of his thumb and forefinger and winked at him. Dick said hastily, "I turn the floor over to R. E."

Kolo said, "You have something to say, R. E.?"

The big center arose. His expression was absolutely deadpan, and his soft southern drawl sounded sober.

"Why, yes. Yes, I say, I do. There has been something bothering me for a long time. I've wrestled with it and battled it but I can't seem to get anywhere. Why, it's bad. Bad, I say, when a thing not only keeps you awake nights but even keeps you awake in Sociology IV. So I've decided to put it up to you, my teammates. Maybe you can help me."

R. E. paused dramatically, then his drawl changed to a loud, plaintive tone, and he pointed an accusing finger at Del Gregon.

"WHY DON'T I GET MORE PUBLICITY!"

At first his teammates stared at R. E. speechlessly as the center sat down. Then they howled. The incongruous humor of such a demand coming from R. E. struck everyone, and the room was in an uproar of laughter. Dick let out a breath.

He heard Steve Foster say to Heavy Carr:

"Priceless, Leo, priceless! That stunt will wipe out the pressure faster and cleaner than anything we could do.

Look at the boys. Relaxed, laughing. Just the thing they needed to lessen tension for the Illinois game."

Heavy Carr nodded agreement.

"I've got a hunch that Kolo figured it like that," the line coach said. "He couldn't have picked a more effective stooge than R. E. But he sure had me worried when he called on Thornley. It could have been bad."

XII

Mom, Dad, and Homecoming

IT WAS good to see his mother and father again. Dick hurried to the car, submitted to an embrace and kiss from his mother.

"Golly, mom!" He grinned. "If any of the guys saw me, I'd have some explaining to do. They'd all want to know who the svelte brunette with the devastating blue eyes is!"

"Why, Dickie!" Margaret Thornley dimpled. "I do believe you've grown up—or is that the usual Joe College line?"

Dick's grin widened. He gave her an affectionate pat. He knew there was more truth than flattery in what he'd said. His mother could pass for a college student—or a young grad-school student, anyway. She certainly didn't look old enough to have a son in college. She liked his remark, too. He turned to his father, gripped the hand that Theral Thornley extended.

"Good to see you, Dick," Professor Thornley said. "You're looking fit."

"You took the words right out of my mouth, sir." Dick's quick glance took in the broad, strong face of his father. Were there more fine lines around his eyes? A few more

gray hairs among the brown? "Ohio State seems to be agreeing with you," Dick added.

"We have no complaints." Dick was aware that his father was watching him closely. Then Theral Thornley said, "We'd better get started. It was quite a job to get Steve to let you loose this morning, and I promised faithfully that we'd have you back by ten. We'll have to hurry if we're going to take in many of the Homecoming decorations. Your mother brought along her movie camera to get pictures to buttress the bragging she does about Michigan."

They drove up State Street to Hill and across and down East University Avenue to view the exhibitions of student ingenuity as portrayed through Homecoming displays and gadgets. They stopped in front of East Quad. Almost all the houses in the dormitory had displays.

The first was a miniature graveyard on one side of the walk with four mounds of dirt to represent the graves of Michigan State, California, Wisconsin, and Northwestern. At the head of each mound was a neatly lettered headstone with the score of the game and the words "Rest in pieces." One freshly dug grave was designated "For today's victim."

"How clever!" Margaret Thornley exclaimed. "Look, Theral, at the powerhouse across the walk. Those two fierce-looking figures in Michigan uniforms look almost real, don't they? What are they doing, grinding on that wheel? Oh, I see, they're making the power to execute that poor Indian in the electric chair. Look at him jounce up and down! But why an Indian? How do they do that, Dickie?"

"Some fellows in the Engine School rigged up the mech-

anism; it's under the box the electric chair sets on. They're executing an Indian because the Illinois nickname—Illini—comes from a tribe of Indians."

"Minnesota, Navy, Purdue, and Ohio fearfully awaiting their execution," Theral Thornley observed, inclining his head toward cringing figures off to the side, in the several colors of teams yet to be met on the Michigan schedule. "Evidently the students have confidence in you fellows, anyway."

Dick looked quickly at his father. He had come to the point where he almost hated the word "confidence." Was his father being subtle?

"I'm going to get a few feet of that," Margaret Thornley remarked. She adjusted the camera and got out of the car.

Theral Thornley looked at his son. He said, "Steve and I had quite a talk, Dick. He told me about the business in Evanston, among other things."

Dick squirmed, said nothing.

"Just as well you didn't write anything about it. Your mother does considerable fretting about you; it's probably better that she doesn't know all the details of the battle you're having with yourself."

Dick winced and looked quickly at his father. Theral Thornley surprised him again.

"Have you ever considered getting together with Bart Jensen and threshing things out?" Professor Thornley asked.

"What do you mean, sir?"

"Let's be frank with each other, Dick. You know of course that it was an immediate promotion for me to accept the position as Head of the Department at Ohio State. But I think you must know also that your mother and I had

weighed things carefully and had all but decided to stay at Michigan and wait for what amounted to a sure promotion here in the course of five or six years when retirement of men above me would have taken place. I began seriously to reconsider after Bart Jensen came to me when I failed him in Psychology I. That conference developed into a bit more than the ordinary student-professor gripe session, Dick."

"What do you mean, sir?"

Professor Thornley glanced at his son sidewise, apparently decided to follow his thesis of frankness.

"Jensen—ah—laid it on the line, was his phrase." Thornley, Senior smiled briefly. "Perhaps I learned some things from him. I know this thing goes back a long way, Dick. Perhaps a portion of the blame is mine. It could well be that I unconsciously gave you a false evaluation of—ah—brains is a poor term, but I think you know what I mean. Perhaps the blame is mine that you and Jensen do not get along."

"That's crazy, sir!" Dick burst out. "It's just that Jensen and I don't click. We never did. It isn't only that he—he—well, doggone it, I suppose he does have brains or he would never have got to college! But . . ."

"Did you . . ." Theral Thornley broke off his interruption, swiftly switched the inquiry to his wife as Margaret Thornley opened the car door. ". . . get adequate footage, Peg?"

She smiled, said, "I think so."

They drove on slowly, admired the many colorful and clever gadgets. They came to one with a lettered sign reading "Strause House."

"Look at that one," Margaret Thornley said. "That sign

means the boys in Strause House made the display, doesn't it? A huge papier-mâché lion, his tongue lolling and—look, his lips move! Every time those two figures in Michigan uniforms twist his tail. And that awful moaning noise! Where does that come from, Dickie?"

"They've got a recording inside rigged over a loud-speaker."

"I guess I'm terribly stupid, Dickie, but I don't quite see a connection between Michigan twisting a lion's tail and Illinois. I thought you said they were called Illini?"

"That's it, mom. It's a kind of pun. See the miniature scoreboard up in back? ILL-LION-I, 0: WOLVERINES, 88."

The Thornleys moved along, commenting on the displays. They came to the Anderson House display. A buzz saw revolved, and, as a Michigan man threw a switch, a sliding arrangement carried the figure of a wildly grimacing Indian almost to the saw teeth before reversing. The Indian was crouched, straining away from the saw in such a position that it was the seat of his buckskin trousers which was almost ripped each time by the saw teeth. A banner across the top of the display was lettered: "ILLINOIS, YOUR END IS NEAR!"

"Specs Cook gave them the idea for that one," Dick commented proudly.

"We don't want to miss the S.A.E. display," Theral Thornley said. "They usually have something pretty elaborate. You'll probably want to get some footage of the annual Mud Bowl touch football game, too, Peg. It should be just about starting."

The car crept along through heavy traffic along South University to Washtenaw. A sizeable crowd of men and

women students lined the hollow that was on one corner of the street junction. Wild cheers and yells rent the air. It had not rained but the Mud Bowl—Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity's front yard—had been thoroughly soaked by a hose so that the traditional Mud Bowl battle for the fraternity touch football championship would live up to its name.

Men in blue sweaters with block maize M's on the front were the officials of the game, and they were not too careful about enforcing rules. The game was rough, but yelling spectators and mud-splattered players were having a grand time. Margaret Thornley got out of the car to film some of the action going on in the muddy hollow.

"Did Bart Jensen think you had flunked him to make things easier for me in football?" Dick asked his father the question bluntly.

"Jensen is, well, forthright," Theral Thornley said. "Perhaps he had some such idea when he came to gripe, but—this may shock you, Dick—Jensen has many admirable qualities. He was mistaken in some of his views, as who isn't? I think we understood each other rather well before he left."

Dick said nothing. Bitter thoughts were chasing through his mind.

"All of us have faults, Dick," Theral Thornley said. "One lesson everyone must learn is that we have to live together, and that living together is a matter of give and take. Perhaps the blame is mine that you grew up with an overdeveloped respect—reverence—for mental accomplishment. Perhaps in such light, we—I include myself—attached too great importance to mental ability, that we lost our sense of values."

"Are you saying that we *are* intellectual snobs, dad?"

"Well, let's not put it quite that forcefully, Dick. I don't really believe that we are, any more than I believe that teachers at U High consciously gave you the edge because you were Dick Thornley, son of Professor Thornley. But I can see how anyone outside could very easily gain that impression. I . . ."

Margaret Thornley came back into the car. She looked from her husband to her son, smiled, made no comment on the seriousness of their expressions.

"If that is touch football," she observed, "those boys certainly have an atrophied sense of touch! Despite the little I know about football, I would venture to say that there won't be harder tackles made this afternoon in Michigan Stadium than some of the 'touches' they make right here in the Mud Bowl. I don't have too much film left; let's look at the S.A.E. display."

A huge banner across the fraternity house read: "IT'S QUALITY THAT COUNTS." Below, on the slope of the hill, a wide strip of white cloth had been laid so that it led to a goal at the top which was lettered "CHAMPS." Halfway up the hill, a representation of a dilapidated, open automobile was loaded with square-jawed, tough-looking men in Michigan football uniforms. They leaned from the car at all angles. Their determined gazes and out-thrust jaws bored toward the Champs goal. The wheels of the make-believe car whirled merrily and gave the impression that Michigan was climbing steadily toward the goal.

Below the dilapidated outfit, and far to the rear, was a long, beautifully streamlined car. The striping was done

in the Orange and Blue of Illinois. A figure in an Illinois football uniform was in front of the powerful-looking car, tugging with all his straining might, if his facial expression was any criterion.

Four more Illinois men pushed at the rear of the long, streamlined car. Some sort of loud-speaking arrangement was hidden in the Illinois car and poured forth a continuous: "Stalled . . . squawk-squawk . . . Stalled . . . squawk-squawk . . ."

"I hope I have enough film left," Mrs. Thornley said as she got out of the car once more.

Theral Thornley resumed his conversation with Dick. "Steve told me how men on other teams are needling you, son. That they taunt you with cracks about riding on my shirttail and that you lack what it takes to travel under your own power. Does that kind of needling still bother you?"

"It's a funny thing," Dick said. "The needling doesn't seem to have any effect on me when I'm in there backing up the line. But when I get a chance to play fullback on offense—well, I can't explain it, sir."

"Explaining a mental quirk is always difficult, Dick. Your trouble is not uncommon in the experience of psychologists. Reworking one's mental conditioning is a tricky proposition, but it can be done. I have every confidence that you will work out of your particular difficulty. Now, perhaps we had better discontinue this. I feel rather guilty, excluding your mother, as it were. I have a feeling that she . . ."

". . . is more and more convinced that it is a man's world." Margaret Thornley finished her husband's sentence

as she stepped into the car. "Darlings, I hope you have finished your man-to-man talk. I've used all my film—and I really can't think of another logical excuse to leave you alone!"

XIII

Sophomore Sockeroo

"POUR IT to 'em, Mike . . . the old fight, gang, the old jinegar . . . everybody knock somebody on the back of his lap. . . ."

Dick was directly behind Mike Flaherty as the starters broke from the squad huddle. Dick slapped Mike on the seat of the pants, said, "Go get 'em, Irisher!"

Mike turned and looked hard at him. Abruptly a big grin broke on Mike's face. He hit Dick with a back-hand thump.

"Hope Steve gives you another chance," Mike said. "Hang tough in there, kid."

Dick felt a lift as he stood there chattering pepper talk with other Michigan reserves on the sideline.

"We're all in there today . . . let's show these Illini what power really is . . . the old fight. . . ."

The kickoff went to Earl Crowe. Earl and Bart Jensen pulled a criss-cross, but Illinois was not fooled. They snowed Earl under a pile of white jerseys at the sixteen.

Pete Bryne surveyed the Illinois defense. It was a 5-3-2-1 setup. Pete sent Mike Flaherty into the line on a spin-buck, but the Illini secondary came up fast and spilled Mike on the twenty. Pete sent the fullback right back off-

tackle. Mike drove and churned the turf and plowed to the thirty-one. First down.

Bart Jensen sped to a second first down in a row on a wingback reverse, and Michigan supporters came alive. The band, massed on folding chairs along the front of the Stadium wall some distance from the players' section, began waving their caps in unison toward the goal and chanting, "Go! Go! Go! . . ."

But Illinois was not a team to be panicked. They stopped Jensen on the wingback reverse for a yard loss. Their big line rushed Earl Crowe on a pass attempt, and Earl's hurried pitch was wide of Bill Manner. Mike Flaherty made six on a spinner, and it was fourth down and four to go. Pete Byrne refused to gamble. He sent Earl Crowe back in punt formation, and Earl lifted a booming kick that went out of bounds inside the Illinois ten.

The defensive unit ran out from the Michigan side. A roar went up from the stands. Dick was startled to hear his name.

"Yea-a-a, you Sophomore Sockeroo! . . . yea, Thornley, sock it to 'em! . . . yea-a-a, you defensive chain-gang. . . ."

Dick made one tackle, covered an Illinois end racing deep downfield on the second play, and Michigan had the ball again in midfield. Earl Crowe had raced across and picked off the Illinois pass that had been aimed for the man Dick covered.

The Michigan stands were in a joyous uproar as Dick came out of the game. Michigan had netted a big chunk of yardage. Again Dick caught his name being yelled from the stands: "Sophomore Sockeroo! . . . Killer Thornley . . . the way to sock 'em, Dick. . . ."

Dick sat in the chair beside Labbie Labadie. It was ex-

hilarating to be near the backfield coach during a ballgame. Labbie made every play with the boys out on the field. If the play was toward the Michigan goal, Labbie swayed to the man on that side of him; when it went toward the Illinois goal, Labbie would be on top of the man on the other side. All the while he kept up a running stream of comment, of which he was completely unaware.

"Watch that tackle . . . get him out of there . . . cut, cut in, Earl! . . . Oh, spizzola! . . . There, there, didn't I tell you to watch that tackle! . . ."

Michigan seemed to be on the march again. They drove for two consecutive first downs. They carried to a first down on the Illinois twenty-two, and there again the Illinois defense threw back three plays. The ball was two yards short of a first down on the thirteen. Steve Foster sent Bob Justin out from the bench for what everybody thought would be a fourth-down try for a fieldgoal.

Everybody thought so except one alert Illinois man who covered Bill Manner all the way and batted down the pass that Pete Byrne flipped from the fake kick formation. It was a touchback, and Illinois took over on their own twenty.

Dick replaced Flaherty at fullback. The stands yelled approval. "Yea, Thornley! . . . Sockerool . . . smear 'em, Dick! . . ."

Illinois began throwing their ground plays. They were effective. Dick and the defensive unit began to learn that Steve Foster and Heavy Carr had not been just talking about the Illini power.

Wham! An off-tackle smash for six. Zip! A flanker that had plenty of speed and seemed as though Illinois threw everybody but the waterboy into the horde of blockers that thundered around Manner's end. An Illinois first

down. The Illinois side of the Stadium roared. Crashing line plays, tricky flankers, power! Illinois drove over the midfield stripe. The public address system droned over and over: "stopped by Thornley . . . tripped up by Lee and Thornley . . . Lee made the tackle after Thornley slowed the ball carrier. . . ."

But Illinois was grinding steadily into Michigan territory.

"Hit 'em, you guys! . . . They're shoving us around—shoving us around, I say! . . . Smear 'em . . . charge harder in there. . . ."

It was hard, smashing, typical Western Conference football. The Illinois offense was in high gear. Then suddenly it unmeshed.

Somebody missed an assignment, and R. E. smashed through and hit a back before the Illinois man really had control of the ball. The oval popped free, rolled crazily along the Michigan thirty-five-yard stripe. Four men flung themselves at the ball, but when the referee unscrambled the pile, a blue jersey with the big maize numerals 39 was snuggled over the ball. Dick Thornley had recovered the fumble, and the Illinois drive was stopped. This time, as Dick trotted off the field, the Michigan cheerleaders were leading an organized Yea Rah Rah.

Yea-a-a
Rah! Rah!
Dick Thornley!

The cheer heartened Dick, but he was puzzled. He flopped into the seat beside Labbie Labadie.

"I don't get it," Dick said. "It's great, all right, but I just don't get this cheering for me!"

"Why shouldn't a defensive back be cheered?" The back-

field coach gave Dick a searching look. "Real football fans appreciate those crashing tackles. A good socking, teeth-rattling tackle is as much of a morale booster, and as thrilling to see, as a broken field run by a ball carrier! There can be as much color to a defensive player as to a flashy, swivel-hipped runner. Get it out of your head that a defensive player is a football stepchild, Dick!"

Dick sat back and mulled over what the backfield coach had said. If Labbie was right, he could—well, he'd be standing on his own feet. He could feel that he was on a par with Jensen or anybody. He could feel that he belonged!

Dick really enjoyed himself the rest of that first half. There was an added zest whenever he smacked his shoulder into an Illinois ball carrier, and Illinois gave him plenty of opportunity for that zest. They had power to burn but just could not seem to get their attack to function for a sustained scoring drive.

The Michigan offense fared little better against the sturdy Illinois defense. They managed to get near enough in the fading seconds of the first half for another fieldgoal try, and this time Bob Justin carried no order from Steve to fake it. Old Automatic Jus stood out there and powered a kick cleanly between the uprights. He kicked the ball from the twenty-eight, and he had enough power behind the boot so that the oval carried twenty rows into the end-zone seats.

Figures on the big electric scoreboards high above the rims of the Stadium at the north and south ends showed Michigan, 3; Illinois, 0, as the squads entered the tunnel to the dressing rooms at the end of the first half.

XIV

Another Clash with Bart Jensen

DICK WAS not conscious of any noise coming from outside the dressing room. He was aware of a background of crowd noise when the band did something that pleased the throng, and he was conscious of a kind of hazy, far-off background of music. But for the most part he just rested and listened to the quiet comments of the coaches.

"Their left tackle has a tendency to play a little wide, Pete. Might try a cutback inside him now and then . . . that right half in there is not the one that scouting reports indicated might be a little handicapped with a bad ankle. . . . If he comes into the game, Pete, remember what to do. . . . You were sucked in on trap plays a couple of times, Hank . . . all you can do on that power drive is to grab as many legs as you can and strip the ball carrier of blockers. . . . You've got to keep rushing that passer, he's dangerous anytime he flips one. . . ."

Dick sat there and absorbed it all. He found himself thinking of what Labbie had said about defensive play being just as satisfying as offensive.

Ben Benson and his assistants circulated among the players, applying a fresh or tighter bandage, or a bit of adhesive over a skinned area after sterilizing the break

in the skin. The trainers peeled off Dick's sweat-soaked jersey, and an assistant manager sponged him off quickly. The cold water was soothing and refreshing. A towel rubbed briskly across his neck and shoulders helped the illusion of freshness.

"How's that shoulder, boy?"

Ben Benson felt Mike Flaherty's shoulder. Mike shrugged. His shoulder was all right. A little touchy, but nothing to bother about. Ben Benson grunted. His fingers probed. Mike didn't change his expression, but there was a flash in his eyes as Ben's fingers found a sensitive spot.

"I don't like it, boy," Ben said. "I don't like it. You ought not to be in there. You get a hard tunk on that shoulder and—well, boy, you come right out of there. No heroics, understand?"

Mike Flaherty grinned and nodded. Dick's pulse hammered faster. If Mike had to come out, he would have a chance at the offensive fullback job again. But he stopped this line of thought with a feeling of guilt. The team needed Mike in there, and Dick knew it.

"Illinois will come back this second half full of fight." Steve Foster was talking now. Dick could feel the quiet in the room. "They're a good ballclub. They're always up for the Michigan game. We can't let down an instant. We can't afford to make mistakes. Give them a break, and they'll pounce on it.

"*Confound* it, three points *can* win, of course, but an Illinois touchdown will make three points look awfully sick. Don't do anything out there too risky, but remember that if there's one slip, we will be under the pressure.

"All right, everybody out."

Crunch-crunch, crunchety-crunch. Crunch-crunch,

crunchety-crunch . . . cleats biting into the tunnel floor. Dick trotted toward the opening. Then abruptly the front men stopped in the tunnel mouth. The band was still on the field. It was formed in the shape of a huge M U and playing the revered *Yellow and Blue*. Dick heard the muted music, the softly sung words of the last stanza.

*Here's to the college whose colors we wear,
Here's to the hearts that are true!
Here's to the maid of the golden hair,
And eyes that are brimming with blue!
Garlands of blue bells and maize intertwine,
And hearts that are true and voices combine:
Hail!
Hail to the college whose colors we wear:
Hurrah for the Yellow and Blue!*

The *Yellow and Blue*. There was a choking tightness in the back of Dick's throat. His eyes stung just a little. He looked at the man next to him a little sheepishly.

"That song does things to me every time I hear it." Barry Shane swallowed too, then grinned. "I must have been bit by the die-for-dear-old-Rutgers bug sometime or other and didn't know it."

Dick was relieved at his words. He could see the other men swallowing and saw the determination in their eyes. They ran out together on the field and threw themselves on the turf to roll around and loosen their muscles. Michigan was to kickoff to start the second half. Dick would be in there with them.

Bob Justin's kickoff was one of those flat-on-the-ground, spinning kicks that are hard to handle. Illinois found it just that. A backfield man finally picked up the ball after

it had bounced off the shins of one lineman, been grabbed at by a second, and bungled by a third Illini man. R. E. Lee and Dick hit the Illinois ball carrier at the same instant, just as he was picking up the ball.

The elusive oval squirted from his grasp. Bill Manner flopped on the ball, and Michigan had a big advantage in the first seconds of the period.

Five men came from the Michigan side. Steve Foster usually sent in eight or nine for the offensive unit. Dick's pulse leaped when he saw that Mike Flaherty was not among the offensive replacements.

"Let's go," Pete Byrne said in the huddle. "Hit these guys before they recover from that fumble. It's a pass. Break."

But Illinois apparently had no need to recover. Their line charged, rushed Earl Crowe, and the pass defense picked up Michigan receivers. The pass was not good.

"All right, we'll try it again," Pete said. "Wide to Jensen in the flat, Earl."

Earl Crowe got off the pass, and Bart Jensen took it in full stride out in the flat zone. The trouble was that an Illinois defender had gone out there with Jensen, and he hit the wingback before Jensen could take two strides. It was third down and five.

Illinois held on the next play. Fourth down and still five. Pete Byrne said in the huddle, "Here comes Justin. Steve is sending him in to make the fake look good. We're within kicking distance. Get down in that end zone, Manner."

"Nuts," somebody said. "Illinois won't fall for this. They'll know it's a phony."

"Yeah, three points wouldn't do any good. They'd know

that a touchdown and the conversion would still top six points."

Pete Byrne said sharply, "Pipe down! Happens that Steve Foster made me quarterback. Besides, it's Steve's idea."

Illinois was not taken in by the fake field-goal attempt. Their forwards charged through, but the secondary held onto eligible Michigan pass receivers. Bill Manner had small chance to get the pass that Byrne flipped into the end zone. Two Illinois men covered, and one of them came down with the ball for a touchback. It was Illinois' ball on their own twenty.

It was hard, battering football for the remainder of that third period. Neither team could get a sustained offensive to clicking. Play was entirely between the two twenty-yard lines. As the teams changed ends of the field for the beginning of the final quarter, Barry Shane walked beside Dick. Shane groaned.

"Sometimes," he said, "it would be all right with me if Heavy took that guy Whitey Donnels at his word for the tackle job! Man, these Illini guys are tough—and I don't mean just *slightly* tough!"

Then in the first three minutes of the fourth quarter came action.

Fifteen seconds were enough to change entirely the complexion of the game. Illinois had the ball on their own twenty-two after Earl Crowe had punted out of bounds. They sent a halfback on a routine off-tackle slash that Michigan had been handling adequately all through the game. But on this play everything fell into place perfectly for Illinois.

A blocker bowled R. E. out of the play. Dick raced across. He could get the ball carrier. He hand-fought a

blocker, gave the Illini man a jerk that spun him off balance. Then, just as Dick was about to launch his tackle, another white-jerseyed figure shot in front of him. Dick was scythed down like a stalk of wheat.

The Illinois man with the ball scampered down the west sideline for seventy-eight yards, and suddenly it was 6-3 for Illinois on the scoreboards. The conversion kick was good, and it was 7-3.

Bitterly Dick berated himself as he plodded disconsolately toward the bench. He knew that he should have seen that second blocker. He went past Bart Jensen. Jensen would probably pass a sarcastic remark at him. He couldn't do much about it in this case. But Jensen merely glanced at Dick and said no word to him. Suddenly Jensen turned and yelled to no one in particular.

"That one won't win for 'em! They just got lucky. Let's get that one back in a hurry, gang!"

Dick felt that there was something about the way Jensen yelled that almost seemed to tell him that he wasn't being blamed. Was it possible? He wondered about it as he sank into his chair in the players' section.

Michigan received. The stands yelled encouragement. The cheerleaders flung themselves wildly about as they led a Fight Locomotive.

Fight! Fight! Fight! Fight!
Mich-i-gan Mich-i-gan
Fight! Fight! Fight! Fight!
Mich-i-gan Mich-i-gan
Fight! Fight! Fight! Fight!
Mich-i-gan Mich-i-gan
Yea-a-a-a

Michigan fought. The line charged harder. Every man turned his eyes more often to the scoreboard figures:

Michigan, 3; Illinois, 7. Illinois battled mightily to keep their lead.

An overeager Illini was offside at a crucial point. The penalty gave Michigan a first down. Pete Byrne called the plays cannily, mixed the attack, kept Illinois off balance. Spinners, reverses, darting slashes at the tackles. They sucked in the Illinois tackle who was playing a little wide. Bart Jensen slanted through the hole on a cutback, and his speed carried him to the Illinois twenty-six.

Then the going got tough, and tougher. Three downs, and Michigan was barely over the twenty-yard line. They needed four yards. Illinois sent in a substitute, a new man at a halfback. Dick Thornley leaned forward in his chair beside Labbie Labadie. The backfield coach was jumping up and down, swaying from side to side.

"There it is, Pete, there it is! There's the man with the trick ankle. Remember, Pete, oh remember!"

Pete Byrne remembered. Scouts had reported that this man might be just a trifle slow in covering on a pass.

The Michigan scoring play was beautiful to watch—for Michigan supporters.

Mike Flaherty handled the ball first on a direct snap from center. Mike made a handoff to Pete Byrne and sifted through the line. Pete masked the ball, faked to Jensen, ran three steps to the right as though he were pulling an end run himself, then abruptly pivoted and tossed a shovel lateral to Earl Crowe.

The Illinois defense was momentarily confused. Mike Flaherty cut into the territory guarded by the Illini back with the weak ankle. Mike put on a burst of speed. He was behind the defensive man.

Mike took the pass from Earl Crowe in full stride and

streaked down the sideline. The Illini halfback raced desperately after the Michigan fullback. At the two-yard line he launched a tackle. Mike staggered, tight-roped to stay in bounds, lost his balance as he plunged across the double stripe of the goal line. He fell awkwardly into the end zone on his bad shoulder.

It was 9-7 for Michigan on the scoreboard, but Ben Benson was running from the Michigan side, and in a moment Mike Flaherty was leaving the game.

"Hah!" Bart Jensen said. "We gotta hang onto that two-point lead. It's a cinch we won't get any more with Mike out of here!"

Dick gritted his teeth, fought down the surge of bitter anger that welled in him. He clenched a handful of pants on each side to help stifle the urge that filled him to punch Jensen again.

And just when he'd begun to think differently of Jensen! He'll never be any different, Dick said to himself bitterly.

XV

Campus Big Shot

“**A**LL RIGHT, shove over, you big moose!”
“Doggone it, do you have to occupy two seats?”
“How’s for sitting down in front, then we can all seel!”
“Let’s go. Get the show on the road. What’s the delay?”
“Hope there’s a Mickey Mouse. . . .”

The usual wisecracks and good-natured ribbing filled the little room on the second floor of the Athletic Administration Building. Monday was the day on which movies of the previous Saturday game were always shown. Mike Flaherty came in, and Labbie Labadie immediately pounced on him.

“How’s that shoulder, Mike, how’s that shoulder?”

“Okay.”

“Did you bake it yesterday and today as Ben told you?”

“Sure.”

“How long did you bake it yesterday? How long did you bake it today?”

Mike Flaherty looked at the excitable backfield coach. Mike put on an exaggerated air of patience.

“Labbie, I give you my word that I baked the shoulder thoroughly. I baked it yesterday, and I baked it today. I baked it until it was gosh-awful done, Labbie. I baked

it until I could stick a fork right through it. Ma always tested a roast like that at home to see if it was done."

Labbie glared. "Wise guy!" he exploded.

Mike Flaherty just grinned at him. Chuckles came from Mike's teammates, but all the squad was as concerned as Labbie Labadie. Queries and anxious comments came from various men.

"You sure that shoulder's okay, Mike? . . . Boy, it better be okay by Saturday. . . . Yeah, take things plenty easy this week, Mike. We'll sure need you Saturday in Minneapolis. . . . Can't blame Labbie, really, for being so darn anxious. . . ."

Steve Foster spoke from the back of the room.

"All right," Steve said. "We're set to start the film of the Illinois game. We made mistakes. We should be able to profit by them."

Steve stopped a moment, then went on in a dry tone.

"When I say *we* made mistakes, I speak advisedly. I want to take this opportunity to admit publicly that I pulled a prize one myself Saturday. Why I ever sent Justin out there to pull a fake kick in that spot, I can't explain. Sports writers panned Pete for poor generalship. I've just issued a statement to the press accepting full responsibility. It was just one of those things. It won't happen again."

This was the kind of man Steve Foster was. It was little wonder the team could play better for him than they even thought they could. He might have dodged responsibility for the Illinois *faux pas*, but Steve was a gentleman and a square shooter.

The movie unwound on the screen. From time to time it was stopped, and a few feet were run back to point out to a man an error made, a missed block, a sloppy tackle.

The film was also stopped on occasion to point out some particularly sharp bit of play on the part of a Michigan man.

The room became quiet and then more quiet as the action on the screen passed the point of Michigan's touch-down. Men who had been in the grueling battle of that fourth quarter relived those moments there in the projection room.

"Run that back, please," Heavy Carr requested the operator. "Now I want you men to note well the way Dick Thornley kept his feet on this particular Illinois sweep. There, see what I mean? The Illinois man had a clear shot at him, and he threw a good block. But Dick instinctively rolled, gave with the momentum of the blocker's charge, and refused to go down. If he hadn't kept his feet, the second Illinois interferer would not have had to leave the ball carrier and could have blocked out R. E. As it was, Dick slowed the play enough so that it was smeared for a nominal gain."

Dick sat there and watched himself on the screen. It made him feel queer inside. That man wearing Number 39 was Dick Thornley—and he was making his share of the tackles.

Illinois had pounded and hammered and slashed with everything they had in that fourth quarter. Pete Byrne, following instructions from the coaches, had played safe. Michigan even punted on third down on several occasions. Illinois had plenty of opportunity to attack.

There! That one had all but got away. Dick squirmed a little in his seat. That play could have lost the ballgame. Labbie Labadie put into words exactly what Dick was thinking.

"Dick was caught by a neat bit of deception there. He was sucked out of position by a trick, or nearly so. He recovered in time to get out there and bat down the pass but—Spizzola! How many times have we told you fellows that in modern football if you got an area to protect on a pass play, you guard that area. No matter if one of the opposition drops dead, *you protect that area!*"

The play on the screen ended. Normally that was the finish of these movies taken for analysis by the coaches. But the Illinois game had been homecoming. The man behind the camera atop the pressbox was a Michigan man. He had used up some footage on the Michigan band, marching triumphantly through the crowd that swarmed onto the field after the game. They could almost hear the band blaring out an exultant *Victors*.

Hail! to the victors valiant

Hail! to the conquering heroes

Hail! Hail! to Michigan, the champions and best—

Hail to the victors valiant

Hail! to the conquering heroes,

Hail! Hail! to Michigan, the champions of the west.

Squad members were humming or whistling the *Victors* as they tramped down the stairs. All the men who had played in the Illinois game were excused from practice for the day. Some had appointments with Ben Benson and his assistant trainers in the varsity training room. They had not gone through a rough, tough football battle like the Illini game without acquiring a full quota of bruises and sore muscles.

"Nice goin', Dick," somebody said. "Makes a guy really appreciate the way you and R. E. backed up that line when you see it on the screen. . . . I'll say. You put out the old

rock 'em and sock 'em football . . . you were in there, Dick, kid. . . ."

The sincere praise from his mates warmed Dick's heart. He grinned in some embarrassment. He left as soon as he could and headed for his room. But he still could not rid himself of that lingering doubt! Labbie had a good word, and Steve, and Heavy. Teammates praised him. He knew he ought to feel that he was an integral part of this Michigan squad.

Dick was restless as he climbed the stairs to his room. For once Specs was in. He even had a textbook open before him on the study table. Specs grinned at his roommate. Dick did not grin back.

Specs said, "Well, how's the big campus hero? Did this week's Hollywood production give you star billing, my killer roommate?"

"I don't feel much like a hero," Dick said glumly. "I let that Illinois guard mow me down on their touchdown run, didn't I?"

Specs eyed his roommate. He quietly closed the book and tossed it on the table.

"What's eating you now?" he asked. "Same thing?"

Dick shrugged, made no denial.

"You know, Dick, you've gotta snap out of it. Moses beard, guy! Get conscious. You're the talk of the campus. You're getting more publicity for the smashing, bone-jarring defensive work you put out than Mike Flaherty or Bob Justin for the points they scored. Come on, my retiring gent. I'll buy you a malted."

They walked down to the campus, decided to pass up the Union and get a malted at a drug store. Quite a few men spoke to Specs for he was well known on the campus. Dick

was not acquainted with so many of them, but they greeted him warmly nonetheless. He nodded, smiled, mumbled something in answer each time.

The boys had their malteds and then wandered over to the book store, where there was a typewriter display. Dick and Specs watched for a time the little animated figures that performed a weird, stiff-legged dance at different intervals to show their joy with the new typewriter.

Suddenly Specs threw his arms wide and did a very credible imitation of the stiff-legged dance that the cardboard figures in the display had performed. Dick stared at his roommate in surprise. Students passing by stopped. A large group formed. Students inside the door peered out the window to see what was happening. Specs stared straight ahead, kept his arms and legs rigid, just like the men who do takeoffs in windows as robots or huge dolls. Chuckles and titters and cracks came from the crowd. Dick dragged Specs away. As they departed, some students came out of the store.

"Oh, yeah," one of them remarked. "The guy in the glasses is squirrely, all right, but harmless. The other guy was Dick Thornley."

"Thornley! The Sophomore Sockeroo?"

"And Killer Dick. And the guy who saved the Illinois game, and so on, and so on. Thornley is big stuff. Specs Cook is okay, too. Just slightly nuts, that's all."

Specs looked at Dick. His eyes sparkled behind his glasses.

"Such is fame," Specs observed. "I confess that the malted was an investment. It's good for a campus politician to be identified with the campus greats. And you're the guy who feels unsure of himself!"

XVI

A Matter of Give and Take

“GREAT DAY, Dick, you’re protecting territory, not opening a hole or taking a man out of a running play! You can’t use a full body block. You don’t chase an opponent—make him come to you. He’ll come! Blocking for defense of your passer is different. . . . Try it again. . . .”

Here we go again, Dick thought. That Labbie sure can drive. He crouched in his position for the snap from center. The defensive line charged, rushed at Earl Crowe. Dick put a solid tie-up block on his assignment.

“. . . a *protecting* block, All . . .” Now it was Heavy Carr talking to Al King. “A shield block or a shoulder block. You gotta stay on your feet. . . .”

“. . . Now you’ve made your block, the pass is away. You have some kind of idea that you just stand there and watch whether it’s complete or not? Great day! Did you ever hear of a pass being intercepted! Fan out, *right now!* Get spread across the field ready to tackle if there should be an interception. . . .”

Michigan’s passing game received a very thorough going over. Labadie and Carr and Etteboon were everywhere Steve prowled around supervising, missing nothing. Every man on the Michigan squad knew he had been in a work-out when the coaches finally called it a day.

"Those Gophers will be tough—tough, I say," R. E. opined. He, Dick, Barry Shane, and Earl Crowe walked up State Street toward the Union for training table dinner. "But by Jimminy, they can't wear me down any more than I am right now!"

"Minnesota will be tough; you can always bet on that," Earl Crowe said.

Barry Shane said, "It would sure be swell if it were as easy as Flash Flager made it sound in his column today."

"I didn't see it," Dick said. "What did Flager have to say?"

"Oh, he predicts that Michigan will bring the Little Brown Jug back to Ann Arbor after what won't amount to much more than a brisk workout. That's the gist of his piece."

"Flager gets out a masterpiece every year on the Minnesota game. His boss is a Minnesota man, and they carry on a running feud."

In the Union lounge Dick found a sportsheet of the Detroit paper for which Flash Flager worked. He skimmed through Flager's column after dinner.

. . . Most notable of Western Conference rivalries . . . dates from 1892 . . . tradition of Brown Jug stems from the famous Little Brown Jug—little in name only, and brown in name only. The Jug is really a sizeable container that is now colorfully resplendent in the Maroon and Gold of Minnesota and the Maize and Blue of Michigan.

. . . The Jug dates back to 1903, when Michigan took a supply of Ann Arbor water to Minneapolis for the squad to guard against possible upset stomachs from strange water. By accident, the Jug was left behind in the

dressings room, and when the Michigan equipment manager wrote, asking its return, Minnesota refused to send it to Ann Arbor. Instead, Michigan was challenged to win it back the next year. . . .

The final paragraph of Flager's column was what interested Dick most.

. . . Your correspondent admits to a slight degree of prejudice toward Michigan. But from the start of the season we have maintained that Michigan has material for one of the finest squads Steve Foster has ever turned out. We believe that the team has found itself, that certain trivial personality clashes are smoothed out. We can see nothing but a Michigan win at Minneapolis. We will go out on a limb and predict that the Wolverines will return from the Northland bearing the Little Brown Jug with a new score added to the long list—on the Michigan side—and it will read Michigan, 23; Minnesota, 0.

Dick scowled a little at the "certain trivial personality" reference. Then, after finishing the article, he wondered how Flager had come up with such an odd score. He was turning over the possibilities of arriving at 23 in a football game, and perhaps it was the repetition of the number that caused him to pick out an advertisement for a show that was coming to a Detroit theater and was pictorially illustrated on the page opposite Flager's column.

The Case of the Twenty-three Jewels, he read. "A British 'shocker' straight from London." One character in the illustration was depicted in a Sherlock Holmes hat, and smoking a curved-stem pipe. A caption below the picture quoted the detective: "Don't anyone leave this room until them jewels are found—see!"

Dick thought the gangster language was out of place, coming from a Sherlock Holmes detective. Then he saw

that *The Case of the Twenty-three Jewels* was listed as a comedy burlesque. He had just thrown aside the paper when Barry Shane came into the room.

"Read Flager's column?" Shane asked.

Dick nodded. "Where the dickens did he dream up the 23?"

"Del Gregon asked him that this morning. Gregon had been talking to Steve about the piece, and Steve was more than a little concerned. But then Flager usually has Steve a little concerned. Gregon said that Flager had it doped that we would get close enough in the first few minutes of play for Justin to boot a field goal for three points—and he had a caustic comment on that which Steve didn't go for too much.

"Then Flager dopes that we'll break the Gophers under the pressure of being behind and we'll score three touchdowns, but Justin will miss all three tries for the extra point. According to Flager, the law of averages is due to catch up with Justin. Well, that adds up to twenty-one points, and Flager accounts for the other two by a blocked Minnesota punt that will bound out of the end zone for an automatic safety."

Shane chuckled. "Flager would have to figure some screwy way or he wouldn't be Flager," he said. "But he'd better stay out of Steve's path until after the game. Steve would much rather have the sports writers make us underdog any time."

R. E. came into the lounge in time to hear Shane's words.

"It's more comfortable to be underdogs," he drawled. "So long as you don't believe it yourself. Those are words of wisdom from my great-grandmammy, and she has a

way of bein' right," R. E. hesitated, then added, "Least-wise anybody who tangled with gram better believe she's right. He'd better, I say! If you're goin' home, Dick, I'd like to come along." The big center heaved a doleful sigh. "That calculus assignment has me on the ropes as usual. On the ropes, I say. Worse'n gram."

"Right with you," Dick said. "Glad to give you any help I can. It just happens that I have the problems done."

"Just happens, he says!" R. E. looked at Shane. "Must be something to be modest as well as smart."

"I wouldn't know." Shane grinned impudently. "I'm only smart!"

In spite of all the explaining Dick did that night, R. E. could not understand the calculus problems. They went over them several times until R. E. became disgusted with himself.

"I'm stupid," he said. "I'm a stupid hill-billy just like gram says. That junk goes right over my head. I hate it, and I don't like the prof. He gripes me. Some of you Brains in there ought to take him down a peg or two, I say."

"Oh, I don't think he's such a bad guy, R. E."

But after the varsity center had gone, Dick found himself remembering the bad time the calculus prof had given R. E. and Jensen. Then he was suddenly thinking of the talk he had had with his father. He scowled. Well, he was not proud of that day in calculus class, but—well, Jensen was such a stupe! Wait a sec, Thornley, Dad doesn't think Jensen is so bad. Oh, heck!

He went to bed with confused thoughts. The next morning he was still thinking about it as he took his seat beside R. E.

There were no problems that morning. The professor

reminded the class that the assigned problems were due the next day. Somebody asked a question about a problem, and most of the hour was taken up in clarifying that question and others that evolved from it. Dick did not know exactly what brought the discussion around to atomic action, but near the end of the hour the professor was busily engaged in an attempt to explain it.

"Basically," the professor said, "and speaking generally, there is no great mystery about atomic action. I can illustrate on the board how such action proceeds."

He wrote an equation on the blackboard and stated that a certain number of electrons were involved. Working from the original equation, he developed a board full of equations.

"So, gentlemen, you see that we now have four less electrons than we had at the beginning of the problem. What became of them, gentlemen?"

Doubtless, to the professor, the illustration was as clear as pure water. To Dick it was about as clear as a glass of muck. He looked around the room. Men were studying the hieroglyphics on the board and frowning. Even the good students looked blank. The professor spoke again, and his tone was impatient.

"Come, come, gentlemen, where are those electrons!"

A dead silence held the classroom for a few seconds. The picture of the detective farce he'd seen in the Detroit paper popped into Dick's head.

"Don't anybody leave this room until them electrons are found—seel"

Dick could scarcely believe that the gruff voice which had mouthed those words emanated from him. What had he done! In a brief second the room was a guffawing up-

roar. The professor stood for a moment without speaking. His face was as blank as the expressions of his students had been earlier. Suddenly he grinned, threw up his hands.

"I surrender!" he said. He glanced at his strap watch. "Class dismissed—before the Law shoots its way out of this maze!"

Outside in the corridor, R. E. looked at Dick in admiration.

"That was something," R. E. said. "Something, I say. But by Jimminy, Dick, you were right. That prof isn't so bad. Maybe I'll even get to like him."

"Hah! He's still a toughie," a voice said. "But that may make him a little more human."

Dick glanced quickly at the speaker. It was the first time Dick could remember that Bart Jensen had made any observation about him that could be construed in a friendly light. Dick was suddenly remembering his father's words: . . . *Jensen has many admirable qualities, Dick. . . . Getting along together is a matter of give and take. . . .*

XVII

Little Brown Jug

EVEN BEFORE the season started, sports writers had written that Minnesota expected to go through to a conference championship and represent the Western Conference in the Rose Bowl. The morning of the game one Minneapolis paper carried on its sportsheet a cartoon depicting a huge bowl of roses and a Gopher—with facial expression suspiciously like Sven, the Minnesota captain—sniffing the roses. A Wolverine sniffed at the rose bowl from the opposite side, and the Wolverine bore an odd resemblance to Captain Kolo.

It was no wonder that the great horseshoe of Minnesota's Memorial Stadium was jammed beyond capacity as the two squads came from the dressing rooms.

"Must be something in the atmosphere up here that makes men big. . . . Did you ever see such bruisers? . . . Sure, they're big but you know the old saw—the bigger they are, the harder they fall. . . ."

Comments from Michigan men indicated that, while they were amply aware that Minnesota had the personnel for a typical Gopher team, they were not particularly awed by Minnesota's size. Dick eyed the Minnesota captain getting off a pass.

"How the dickens did a small fellow like Sven ever get mixed in with those giants?" he asked.

"Sven isn't small. He only looks small by comparison. Haven't you ever heard how Sven was discovered by Minnesota?"

Dick gave Mike Flaherty a look that was more than a little suspicious. Mike was a great tease. But the full-back's face was solemn now. Dick said, "No. How was he discovered?"

"Well, every year after the football season, the Gopher coaches go out beating the bush for likely football material. They usually don't give a man a second look unless he's big and powerful as a horse, but one Gopher coach happened to run into Sven 'way back in the hinterland of Northern Minnesota. The coach had taken a gun along, figuring that he might as well shoot a mess of squirrel to take back with him in case he didn't find a likely football candidate.

"The coach hadn't had any luck at all—no football material and no squirrels. He was disgusted. Then he came on a rather slender young gent, bareheaded and in his shirt sleeves, although the coach was bundled to the chin against the icy wind. The slender guy had four squirrels dangling from his belt, but he had no gun.

"How in heck did you get those squirrels?" the coach asked.

"Why, it's easy," the young feller said. "All you have to do is to outsmart the squirrel. They're pretty cagey, squirrels. They'll peek out from behind a limb and if they see a gun, they'll just pop back into their holes and stay there.'"

Mike Flaherty took a pass from Earl Crowe, threw the

ball across to Pete Byrne. Then he went on with his story.

"The slender gent told the coach to hide his gun, and he'd show him how to get squirrels. After the gun was hidden, the guy pointed out a squirrel high in a tree, about thirty yards away. He told the coach to watch. Then he took a rock about as big as his fist from his pocket and heaved the rock left-handed at the squirrel. It missed by a whisker. But a second left-hand heave dropped Mr. Bushytail out of the tree, deader than a dead squirrel.

"'Gosh,' the coach said, 'what a forward passer a guy like you would make! But I don't know whether the boss would go for a southpaw passer.'

"The slender gent apologized to the coach for missing with the first throw. He explained that he never missed when he threw *right*-handed, but his ma complained that the squirrels were so mangled that way from the force of the rock that he had to ease up by throwing only *left*-handed."

Mike Flaherty caught a football thrown at him, weighed it thoughtfully, heaved it awkwardly with his left hand.

"And that's when Sven was discovered by the Minnesota coach," he finished. "Ever since Sven came to Minnesota they've had a passer who can heave a short pass like a bullet or toss a long one the length of the field. I suppose a fellow could do it, with practice."

Dick watched Sven after that tall tale from Mike Flaherty. Sven's passes almost lived up to Flaherty's buildup. Then suddenly Kolo and Sven were meeting in the middle of the field with the officials, and a coin was tossed. Minnesota had won and elected to receive. As Dick lined up for Justin's kickoff he was thinking that Sven's passing, combined with the physical power of that

giant Minnesota line, would give Michigan a very interesting afternoon.

"Ready, Sven?" the referee called to the Minnesota captain. Sven raised his hand. "Ready, Kolo?" Captain Kolo signified that Michigan was ready. A jumble of fight cries came from teammates who were lined along the sideline as the Michigan team moved forward for the kickoff.

"Go get 'em, gang . . . the old fight . . . pour on the coal . . . who gets the tackle? . . . the old pepper . . ."

The plunk of Bob Justin's foot against the ball started to settle the butterflies in Dick's stomach. He tried to dodge a block a Minnesota lineman threw at him, missed, and the solid thump of a hard shoulder against his ribs finished knocking out the butterflies. Dick rolled with the shoulder block, hand-fought loose. He flung his bulk at the Minnesota ball carrier and helped Shane and King smother him on the Minnesota twenty-five-yard stripe.

The Minnesota power smacked off-tackle the very first play. Wham! The first blocker through the hole slammed a cross-body block that Dick barely managed to slip. These big Gophers did not fool. The play made four yards. Sven faked a pass on the next one, came roaring around the flank behind a thundering herd of interference. But Shane and Bill Manner stripped Sven of blockers. Dick put all he had into that tackle try. It felt good to drive through Sven's stiff arm, slam his shoulder into Sven's thighs, and know that the tackle was clean and hard.

Then Dick was on the bench. Michigan had thrown back the initial Minnesota drive, forced the Gophers to punt. Steve Foster had a pat on the back for each defensive man who came out of the lineup.

"Nice going, Dick . . . beautiful tackling . . . you were in there, Al . . . Bill . . . Hank . . ."

Labbie Labadie was wiggling around, hopping up, sitting down, moving from side to side with the plays. Michigan made a first down. It was close, and the referee called out the headlinesman and the measuring chains. A roar of disapproval rolled from the stands as the referee waved the first down. This was a partisan crowd, as always.

Then Dick was back in the game. A Minnesota lineman had barged through and hit Flaherty just as Mike was tossing a shovel lateral to Earl Crowe. The fumble was recovered by Minnesota.

Watch that Sven. Watch that tricky cutback the scouts reported. Here it comes! Slam! Nice going, R. E. They had me suckered on that one. Boy, these Gophers are tough.

Minnesota drove to the eight-yard line before Michigan stopped them. Something was wrong. Suddenly Michigan men seemed to have lost their touch. Tackling was sloppy. Gopher ball carriers slipped away for extra yardage when solid tackling would have dropped them. It was a good thing that R. E. intercepted a rifled pass from Sven.

They were on the bench again. Labbie was talking excitedly to himself and everyone else.

"Oh, spizzola! Look at that, look at that terrible block! No wonder we can't go any place! See, see! Great day!"

Steve Foster, not raising his voice, was sending substitutes into the game, seeking an effective combination.

"That end has to be taken out of the play, Whitey. Shane isn't getting him. They have us as well scouted as we have them. We've simply got to make plays work by sharp

blocking. Go in there and keep that end out of our back-field."

Barry Shane came out of the game, sat down on the bench beside Dick, slammed his helmet to the ground.

"I'm terrible out there," he said. "I couldn't block a high school Freshman!"

The quarter ended. Minnesota had been in scoring territory three times. Michigan had not penetrated beyond the Minnesota thirty. The great crowd stood and yelled wildly as the teams changed ends of the field. Dick could hear the exultant cries from Minnesota supporters in the stands behind the Michigan bench.

"We'll show these cocky Michiganders! . . . Back to Ann Arbor and no Brown Jug, you Wolverines! . . . Go, you Galloping Gophers, gol . . ."

Earl Crowe was forced to punt from deep in Michigan territory. Then Dick was in there, smashing, driving, hurling his bulk at pounding Gopher ball carriers. He seemed to have caught the sloppy-tackling fever. Sven slipped out of his grasp and twisted and pivoted an extra twelve yards.

"So, this is the Sophomore Sockeroo, huh! . . . Killer Dick—what did you kill, a half hour of practice! . . . You won't be in here long, Thornley. . . ."

Minnesota men jabbed the needle. Dick gritted his teeth. He socked Sven on the next play just as the Gopher star popped through the line, and it felt good to dump him hard to the turf. Dick glared at a big Minnesota man who had been plaguing him.

"Galloping Gophers, huh! Just where are you guys gonna gallop?"

It seemed like hours before the gun sounded for the end of the half. The scoreboard read: Minnesota, 0: Michigan, 0. But it was a good thing that first downs did not count as scores. Minnesota had pushed Michigan around mightily that first half.

It was a solemn and subdued squad that went to the Michigan dressing room. There were none of the usual wisecracks. Steve talked very little. Dick felt that Steve was disappointed in his team. Well, it was no wonder. The halftime intermission was all too short.

Bart Jensen took the second-half kickoff. Somebody missed a block that might have shaken him loose, but Jensen battled on to the thirty before they knocked him out of bounds.

"Thornley!"

Dick leaped at the call from Steve Foster. The head-coach gave swift orders.

"In there for Flaherty. Tell Pete this is the spot to shoot the works. *Confound it*, make this one good out there!"

Pete Byrne seemed to expect Dick's information. He nodded, called the play in the huddle, and the work that Michigan had put in all week on protecting the passer paid off.

Dick, R. E., Shane, and Kolo formed a cup of blockers in front of Earl Crowe. Earl had time to "bake a cake" behind the wall of protection. Bill Manner and Etten had plenty of time to get downfield. Bart Jensen lured a defender out to cover him in the flat zone, and Bill Manner button-hooked back at the Minnesota thirty-five and took a rifled pass from Earl. Manner rammed to the eighteen before the safety man scythed the legs from under him.

Dick threw a quick glance toward the bench. Mike Flaherty was not coming in! Dick's pulse leaped. Steve had not lost all confidence in him.

"Here it is, Pete. Here's the golden opportunity. Hit 'em with everything we've got. Throw the book at them!"

But the giant Minnesota line crashed through and smothered Earl on an attempted slash off-tackle. They stopped Bart Jensen with a bare two yards on the wing-back reverse. Pete Byrne called Dick's signal for a spinner. Dick put everything he had into the play. He knew he had not bungled it. But that raging Gopher line was just too tough. Two line backers smashed him down, and the ball was still four yards short of a first down. Bob Justin raced out from the bench.

There was the snapback to Pete, kneeling to hold. Pete grabbed the ball and placed it in one smooth motion. Justin never wavered, never looked up at those charging Minnesota forwards. Dick threw his block at his assignment, and his heart almost stopped beating for a second as he missed clean contact. But his reverse leg block knocked the Gopher down.

There was the thud of Justin's foot against the ball. Dick could not see the ball, but he looked up at the referee and for an agonizing moment thought the kick had missed, as the official glanced at the umpire, then the field judge, and the headlinesman.

The referee raised both hands high above his head. The kick was good! Old Automatic Jus. Beautiful figures on the scoreboard showed Michigan, 3; Minnesota, 0.

Centuries later, thousands of slamming blocks and tackles later, the game-ending gun went off. Those same glorious figures adorned the scoreboard. The thought ran

through Dick's mind as he plodded wearily off the field that Flash Flager had missed his prediction by only twenty points.

Michigan, 3; Minnesota, 0.

XVIII

Minnesota Game Aftermath

IT WAS Monday after the Minnesota game, and Dick Thornley had returned to his room after lunch to pick up books for his afternoon classes. Specs Cook was reading a newspaper as his roommate came in. Dick noticed that Specs folded the paper rather hurriedly and tossed it on his bed. He saw that it was a Chicago paper.

Dick picked up the paper idly and said, "What did that Chicago pressbox expert come up with? He usually has some caustic barb to jab at Michigan or . . ."

He broke off, stared at the headline across the sport-sheet.

MICHIGAN ROSE BOWL BUBBLE READY TO BE PRICKED

As Dick read the story beneath the headline, his brown eyes snapped more and more.

. . . nearing the blowoff stage for the much-publicized Michigan Wolverines. Your correspondent did not witness the game Saturday in Minneapolis, but we have done a bit of research over the weekend. It is our considered opinion that Michigan is definitely on the down grade. Let us have a look at the record. . . . Michigan opened the season with a not-too-impressive win over

Michigan State by a 17-7 count. Then Michigan fans were cheered by three successive Wolverine victories by convincing margins. A strong California squad fell to the Western Conference champions, 21-13; a weak Wisconsin team succumbed by a three-touchdown margin—which in all fairness we must admit could have been much more than a 21-0 defeat for the Badgers had Steve Foster desired to put on the heat. The 20-6 victory over a good Northwestern team was also impressive, but the crack in the shell of Michigan invincibly began to appear in that game. . . . We refer, of course, to the evidence of internal dissension in the Michigan squad which flared in the Evanston affair. Consider further.

. . . Michigan defeated Illinois by a 9-7 count. It took a place kick by Justin to decide the battle in favor of Michigan. At Minneapolis, the Wolverines were virtually run out of the Stadium by the powerful Minnesota Gophers, but emerged with a slim 3-0 win, again by virtue of a field goal from the toe of Bob Justin.

. . . Consider again. In three games of six, a field goal has been a decisive factor—and this is the highly touted Michigan machine which was doped to steamroller opposition on the path to a Rose Bowl game come New Year's Day.

. . . We concede that Michigan has the squad personnel—but we know from our research that there is far from unity and harmony in the Michigan backfield. We know from information divulged by a source very, *very* close to the Michigan squad. . . . We predict that the festering boil will come to a head—and the Michigan Rose Bowl bubble will be pricked and deflated.

Dick looked up from the paper at his roommate. He was seething.

"Take it easy," Specs said. "I was hoping that you wouldn't see that paper. You gotta remember that guy was . . ."

"Jensen!" Dick spat. "Jensen is responsible for this. Oh, the dirty . . ."

"Take it easy," Specs cut in. "You don't know that the guy is quoting Jensen."

"Know it! For gosh sakes, Specs, you stood right beside me when the guy called me from Chicago yesterday. You heard him trying to pry something out of me that he could use in his darned story. You heard him ask me how he could reach Jensen after I told him that Del Gregon or Steve Foster did all the talking for Michigan publicity."

"Sure, sure, I heard him." Specs cut in again. "But Bart Jensen had the same warning from Steve Foster that you had. He wouldn't be brainless enough to . . ."

"He's brainless enough to do anything! He's a stupe! And he hates me!"

Specs looked at his roommate, shrugged. "No use in us battling," he said. "But take it easy before you blow your top. Think it over, Dick."

Dick thought it over, but he was still bitter when he climbed the stairs to the little room in the Athletic Administration Building for the showing of the Minnesota game movies.

Steve Foster ordinarily had nothing to say before the game film started. But today he moved to the front before the lights were turned out. The hum of conversation quickly died.

"I don't have to tell you men that the coaching staff felt little exhilaration over our performance in Minneapolis. Confound it, when men like Leo Carr and Labadie and Etteboon spend hours piled upon hours in painstakingly teaching the basic fundamentals of football, and you go out on a field and put out such a performance as

you did Saturday, there is very little to feel exhilaration about!

"We were plain lucky to get past the Gophers. Minnesota outrushed us, outfought us, outpassed us—in short thoroughly outplayed us. If we hadn't gotten the breaks, we would have been beaten by three or four touchdowns. You showed all the signs of a team that had allowed sport-sheet headlines to make it smug and complacent. You had won five consecutive games! You believed what you read in the papers! *Confound* sports writers who write such drivell!"

Steve Foster's eyes went around the room. Men moved uneasily in their chairs.

"Speaking of sports writers," Steve went on, "let me say right now that I take a dim view of some of the clan. You have all read—or will read—the blast that a certain Chicago writer has in his paper today. I say flatly that it is made up strictly of whole cloth. I refuse to believe that any man closely connected with our squad would for one moment hint at the inane, preposterous stuff this fellow wrote.

"Disregard any such drivel that there is dissension in our squad. You know better. For that matter, it would not be a bad idea if you disregard everything that is written by sports writers and just concentrate on playing football! Now, sit back and watch the missed blocks, the sloppy tackling, the general all-around poor football that you displayed Saturday—and try to be complacent!"

It was the nearest thing to a tongue lashing that Dick had ever heard Steve Foster give. Steve was the last man in the world to carp about a game—if he knew his men had played the best football they could. But Michigan's

play in the Minnesota game had been a far cry from Steve Foster precision football.

The movie ran for what would have been about the first five minutes of the opening quarter before Heavy Carr called for the projector to be stopped. The scene on the screen showed Barry Shane in the act of being shoved aside by the Minnesota end who had been a thorn in the Michigan backfield all afternoon.

"See that, Shane?" the line coach said. "That was the start of that guy wrecking us. How many times have you been told that you've got to be a puncher, not a pusher? Look at you! You didn't have enough authority behind your charge to dent a creampuff! What happened, for heaven's sake? You were handling him, then all of a sudden he made you look worse than the rawest high school recruit!"

Barry Shane squirmed in his chair. He was rarely at a loss for words, but there just weren't any words to answer the line coach. The film went on, stopped a few feet farther past Shane's trial when Jerry Etteboon had a few words to say to Bill Manner.

"The cardinal principal in defensive end play is to keep the ball carrier from going around you—you know that, Bill. Take a look at Sven flanking you up there! Not once, but a dozen times you allowed him to flank you. It's a wonder that Sven didn't score ten touchdowns around your end alone!"

No one escaped. First one coach then another singled out some glaring omission or commission. Labbie Labadie had plenty to say about big Mike Flaherty's lack of finesse in the spinner plays. Pete Byrne was informed quite crisply that he was expected to block now and again. Hank Gross,

Al King, R. E. Lee, Bart Jensen—the whole squad. Even Captain Kolo.

"You're All American, Kolo," Heavy Carr said bluntly. "It's expected that you will be sharp enough to avoid an obvious trap-play like that one. Take a look. You should have smelled that setup, but you walked right into it."

Once Dick Thornley was praised for a sharp tackle by Labbie. The next instant the backfield coach was on an entirely different tack.

"Great day, Thornley, you had Sven right in your grasp, and he pivoted loose as though you had only slapped at him! You *drive* your shoulder into the ball carrier's guts—you don't cuddle it there! *You wrap your arms around his legs and you lift him and drive him backwards!*"

The movie finally ended. Dick felt almost as weary as he had felt after the game in Minneapolis. He was not surprised when Steve informed all and sundry that they were to remain for a chalk talk.

The chalk talk might have been a carbon copy of the first one the coaches had held at the start of practice. They stressed fundamentals. They hammered and pounded on blocking technique. Steve listed the general rules for tackling, the same rules that he had passed out in mimeographed sheets weeks ago. He went over them one by one.

Tackling is 90 per cent *desire*, 10 per cent technique. You must *want* to tackle . . . hit the ball carrier with authority—your shoulder and body does the work, not your arms . . . shoulder contact must be followed *immediately* by wrapping your arms around the legs of the ball carrier and heaving up and back . . . keep your feet and drive to throw your man backward, or at least

stop his forward progress . . . the trajectory of a tackle should be *low* and *up*. . . .

"Tuesday workout will be devoted entirely to blocking and tackling," Steve concluded the lecture.

The headcoach was as good as his word. Tuesday afternoon the squad was divided up regardless of position. Half went with Steve and Labadie to the tackling dummies; the other half went with Heavy Carr and Jerry Etteboon to the blocking sacks. Dick drew the tackling assignment first.

"All right," Steve began. "Granted that any tackle which stops the ball carrier is a good tackle, there still are techniques to seek for the ideal. The head-on tackle may be used chiefly by linemen on the line of scrimmage or across it, or by a backer-up as the ball carrier drives through a hole in the line. But you may get a chance any place or any time in the game and, confound it, you're all going to at least know *how* to make a head-on tackle!

"Your feet should be well apart, your legs coiled, your back straight, your head up, and your eyes on the ball carrier's middle. You aim your tackle with your head, not your shoulder. The margin of error is thus decreased. Hurl yourself as you take off. Explode! All right, let's see how many times you can wreck this dummy!"

The first man in line hit the dummy. Dick thought it was a good tackle. Labadie and Steve did not agree.

"Eyes on the target . . . feet spread, SPREAD! . . . go at a man with those narrow placed feet and mincing steps and you're a pushover. . . ."

"You've got to LIFT . . . the trajectory is low and up, not high and down . . . you've got to *want* to hit him or you won't hit him. . . ."

Dick's turn came. Set. Run down the runway, keep your

feet wide apart, drive, ram your shoulder into the dummy. The stuffed canvas legs are packed hard from having the filling pounded by hundreds of tackles. Dick heaved and drove. The dummy came off the hanging device, and he got up and spat the sawdust from his mouth. Labadie grunted. It must have been a good tackle.

Dick went to the end of the line, but amazingly quickly he was back at the front. Crouch, drive, launch yourself at the swinging dummy. The thing was more tricky than Sven. He did not hit the dummy clean. He heard about it from Labadie.

"A typical Minnesota game tackle! You've got to hit him with authority!"

It went on. And on. Hit the dummy and hit the dummy and hit the dummy and keep on hitting the dummy. Sweat soaked the practice jerseys. Sawdust and grime ground into their faces and necks. The stuff worked down underneath shoulder pads and rasped like emery cloth, but they still kept hitting the dummy.

Finally Steve and Labadie sent their squad over to Carr and Etteboon. Dick dragged a little. He was not alone. All of them were dragging. They felt as though they'd been hitting that demon of a tackling dummy for ten hours!

Heavy Carr never said much. He explained briefly that there were many different blocks, that they were supposed to know that. He mentioned just two main purposes to blocking. (1) To move the other man out of the play. (2) To keep the other man from moving in on your play. There were two primary blocks for this purpose: the shoulder block and the cross-body block, sometimes called the full body block.

"No matter what type of block you're gonna use," the

line coach finished, "you gotta remember two things: get contact and keep contact until the need for your block is past, and be a puncher, not a pusher. You can't relax. If you accomplish your assignment, it's up to you to keep punching. Hunt another guy in a wrong-colored jersey to block as long as the ball hasn't been blown dead."

Heavy Carr and Jerry Etteboon were no easier to please than Steve Foster and Labbie Labadie. They kept driving every minute.

Heavy Carr stressed the reverse shoulder block. "Use it when you want to vary your tactics from a straight charge. Good deception. Smart defensive men learn to play you if you use the same block every time. In the reverse shoulder block you use the shoulder opposite from the one he is expecting."

Jerry Etteboon bore down on the sideswipe block. Ends used it often on defensive backs, and the end coach was a master at teaching it. He talked about the sideswipe, which may be a shoulder block thrown from the side or a cross-body block used the same way.

Etteboon then went on to the pivot block. "Use it when you have a man to move in who is outside you, or vice-versa. Drop your outside foot to the rear, swivel sidewise, and use the other guy's charge so as to hit him with the outside shoulder and drive him the way you want.

"Now the open and shut block. Feint your man into charging at what he thinks is a hole, then sock him. Open the gate, then shut it."

"My gosh," Dick groaned, "I didn't think there were so many doggone blocks!"

Mike Flaherty said, "They're inventing them as they go along."

"Stationary blocks . . . brush blocks . . . the cross-body block. Throw your body across the guy you are blocking. But never do it from behind. It's clipping if you hit from behind, and clipping is a dangerous and useless and demoralizing foul that can cost a ballgame. *Don't go to the ground!* Keep on your hands and feet and keep driving contact until your ball carrier is safely past the danger zone. Get on the ground and you are out of the play."

There were variations of the cross-body block, the reverse cross-body block. Dick thought that the grind would never stop. He was completely exhausted, but he kept on hitting the blocking sack and punching and driving.

Heavy Carr finally called it a day. Dick and Mike Flaherty started for the fieldhouse, but Labadie yelled, "All backfield men twice around the field!"

Mike Flaherty groaned as they started jogging around the practice field. "Feel my ribs," Mike gasped. "Labbie's got me skinnier than that poor little dog he ruined when he was coach at a teacher's college!"

Dick smiled wearily. While they had been practicing, his concentration had been on following instructions from the coaches. But now his thoughts went suddenly back to the Chicago sportsheet.

That darn Jensen! The dirty—the big stupe!

XIX

"Come Out of the Woods"

BARRY SHANE lounged in the chair that Specs had vacated. Barry had made no comment when Specs picked up a book and mumbled something about going upstairs to work with Goldman. Dick looked curiously at the blond tackle star.

"Must be something hush-hush," Dick said. "You usually want Specs to stick around."

Shane grinned, said easily, "Oh, not exactly hush-hush. But I did drop in to get some things off my mind that have been kicking around for quite a while."

"Well?" Dick pushed aside his organic chemistry book. "What have I done now?"

Shane's grin broadened.

"Coming from 'most any other guy," he said, "I'd believe you had a guilty conscience. Maybe you have at that. What *have* you done?"

Then quickly Barry Shane became serious. He nodded toward the thick textbooks on Dick's study table.

"You guys in the Engine School have to really put out," Shane said. "So I'll not stall around. When I said I had some things to get off my mind, I didn't mean any gripe. Or maybe it is a gripe, in a way. Thing I want to talk to you about is—well, college spirit is a poor term, but I don't know what else to name it."

"College spirit!" Dick was surprised and looked it. "I don't follow you."

"I said it was a poor term. Look, Dick, I'm going to talk frankly. Okay?"

"Sure it's okay." Dick had put aside his books entirely now. "What the dickens are you driving at?"

"I came to Michigan a pretty cocky bird with a lot of cockeyed ideas," Barry Shane spoke apparently irrelevantly. "Maybe you know about the crazy way I acted toward Kolo. Because he is a Polish lad and I had some screwy ideas about, well, being better than Polskis and stuff like that.

"I had all the confidence in the world in Barry Shane. Guess I still have. Maybe some of it was on the wrongish side, but the way I see it, a fellow has to believe in himself. Jerry Etteboon and Ben Benson and practically everybody on the squad—besides Earl Crowe working me over as my roommate—finally got me a little straightened out. But the whole thing boils down to the fact that Michigan did a lot for me. There isn't any other place like Michigan, Dick."

Dick said, "You don't have to sell me on Michigan. I was born and raised in Ann Arbor. Michigan has always been in my blood. I guess I'm dumb, but I still don't follow you."

"I'm probably making a hash of it," Shane said. "What I'm trying to convey is that Michigan can do for you what it did for me, only with reverse English. Look, Dick: you came up to the varsity from the Frosh with the coaches and the guys on the squad, sure that Michigan would have a rip-snorting fullback for at least three years. Steve and Labbie were sold on you, and you showed that you

had the goods. You earned the starting job, and that was okay with Mike Flaherty. Mike knows you've got something that he doesn't have.

"Then what happened? You went to pieces against Michigan State, your dauber went down and stayed down. You began to lose confidence in yourself, and you've been getting no better fast. You've got to get back on the highway; Michigan needs you in there in the key spot. I'm telling you to look at it from the point of view of Michigan instead of from Dick Thornley's angle. Oh, nuts, I'm not saying what I mean! Look: was it the needling that State guys dished out that got you down?"

Dick did not answer for a moment.

"Partly, I suppose," Dick finally said. "Maybe that was just the verbal crystalizing of a thing inside me."

Suddenly he was telling Shane all about Dick Thornley and Bart Jensen from the time they were in high school. He told Barry Shane why Dr. Theral Thornley had left Ann Arbor.

"Maybe I did unconsciously rely too much on dad," he said. "Maybe I *was* a kind of snob. It's hard to talk about a thing like that; you don't even know yourself. But when I came up to college, I was doubtful whether I really had what it takes to make the grade. Frosh football seemed to prove that I did—until the State Frosh came over here to play.

"You guys don't remember it, but I was the fumble-bumble king that day. They licked us by a touchdown, and the touchdown was a direct result of one of my fumbles. My fumbling cost our guys at least two other touchdowns that we might have made. I was terrible.

"I was as terrible in that game as I was this year in the

Northwestern game, only I—I lost my head in Evanston and made things worse."

Dick stopped. He seemed to be reliving those many painful afternoons. Barry Shane looked at him, and there was amazement in his eyes.

"So you had a couple of bad days," he said. "Holy Toledo, everybody has a bad day once in a while. Just because Jensen threw barbs into you is no reason to believe that you're always gonna have bad days!"

Barry Shane got up. He belted Dick on the shoulder.

"Forget that Frosh game. Forget the Northwestern business. Forget Jensen. The needling doesn't bother you when you're in there on defense because you've got confidence in yourself then. Hand the barbs back all the time, jam them down the throats of the needlers. That's all you have to do.

"Look, Dick, you can do it. You've got all the natural ability the job needs. Your reflexes are keen, you're fast, you're rugged, and you're smart. If you just *believe* you can handle the ball, you can. I know it. Michigan is counting on you."

Shane grinned suddenly, then chuckled aloud.

"It sounds screwy for cocky Barry Shane to preach that Michigan is counting on you. I thought it was sticky-gooey when Jerry Etteboon dished out the alma mater line to me. But believe me, there's a lot of solidness behind the alma mater business."

Dick Thornley was not stupid. He had been turning over in his mind the question of why Barry Shane had come up to his room and delivered a pep talk.

"Well, thanks for the fight talk," he said. "Tell me, Barry, what's the score really? Is this a Steve Foster-inspired visit? Or Labbie?"

Barry Shane studied him a moment. Then Shane grinned a little sheepishly.

"Looks as though I'm not so smooth as I thought," he said. "No use denying that Steve sort of suggested a talk from a guy like me might help you. I've been wondering whether that was strictly a compliment. But Steve and Labbie and Jerry and—well, all of us, Dick—are darned concerned. We're all pulling for you to crack loose and tear things apart. Now, I'd better get out of here and let you get at those books before . . ."

The opening of the door from the hall broke off Shane's words. A procession entered the room. And what a procession! Goldman headed it. He carried a black raincoat. Behind him came Red, who was bearing a three-cornered paper hat. The hat was black and had a fringe of torn paper twisted into a tassel that dangled from a corner.

Behind Red a chunky youth carried a flat cardboard tray upon which reposed an ordinary lead pencil and the kind of eraser that is intended half for ink and half for pencil. Pudge Friedberg was struggling mightily to suppress a grin. The cardboard tray that Pudge carried so ceremoniously was lettered "Awards for Meritorious Achievement." Specs Cook brought up the rear of the procession. Specs carried a circlet of twisted black-and-red paper.

"We are a delegation," Goldman intoned solemnly. "We are a very learned delegation. We come from afar in order to confer a well-merited degree upon the most deserving stude in the housel"

"Yea-a-a, and so be it. . . . Let no man belittle our delegation. . . . Learned men pay homage from all points of the compass. . . ."

Dick stared at the weird assemblage. What now? But Goldman went on in the same solemn tone.

"Richard Thornley, it has been brought to our attention that you are deserving of great honor. It has been recorded faithfully that whilst certain feather-brained colleagues of yours fritter away their time in pursuit of radio programs, the cinema, and such, you faithfully stick with your books. That you, upon numerous occasions, arise from bed at unholy hours of the morning and peruse said books. We therefore come to confer a unique degree upon you. Arise, Richard Thornley."

Dick stood up. Goldman draped the black raincoat around his shoulders. Specs hung the black-and-red circlet about his neck. Red placed the paper hat on his head and flung the tassel across in his conception of the manner in which the tassel of an academic cap is moved when a scholarly degree is granted. Pudge Friedberg extended the cardboard tray with the pencil and eraser.

"We solemnly dub thee Doctor of Textbooks, *ABC, XYZ, PDQ*," Goldman intoned. "This solid gold pencil and platinum-tipped eraser represent material evidence of the spiritual glory that is an integral part of the degree. Richard Thornley, Doctor of Textbooks, we salute you!"

The four salaamed gravely. With no further word they turned and marched from the room. Barry Shane shook his head in admiration.

"Dollars to doughnuts that was Specs' idea," he said. "He's sharp. Incidentally, Dick, that should give you a pretty good idea of how you stand with your housemates. Guys who live with a fellow have the real lowdown on him, and they don't pull a gag like that unless he's pretty solid."

Shane's blue eyes sparkled then and he grinned.

"They're onto you, fellow. They know you have to dig for all this mental superiority. *They* certainly don't consider you're any intellectual snob—and as far as I know, none of the gang thinks that. Come out of the woods, Dick, and give yourself a chance."

XX

Pressbox Fullback

“DON’T LOOK at me as though you think I’m going off my rocker!” Labbie Labadie exploded.

It was three minutes by the scoreboard clocks before the first half of the Navy game was to end. Dick stared at the backfield coach in amazement.

“It’s orders from Steve,” Labadie went on. “Go get your shower and into your street clothes. Steve wants you to spend the second half in the pressbox.”

“But—but why? I don’t get it. What’s the . . . ?”

“You’re going up there for a purpose,” the backfield coach cut in. “Just keep your shirt on and listen. You’re going to keep your gaze riveted on that Navy fullback. You’re going to watch his every move. There isn’t a better spinner in the country. Navy is outmanned today, and we’ve got them down four touchdowns. We don’t crave to humiliate a respected opponent, so the orders will be out to let Navy have possession of the ball most of the time. You’ll have plenty of opportunity to study that Navy fullback.”

Dick wondered if his being sent to the pressbox wasn’t just another step in the attempt to get him restored to pre-Michigan State status.

But it was fun being up in the pressbox. Del Gregon had pointed out famous sports writers, big names in the football world, the All American pickers. He had shown Dick where the Purdue and Ohio scouts were seated. There were a couple of men in uniforms of army officers, scouting Navy for West Point. Del puffed out his cheeks in his peculiar way, then looked around guardedly before he pointed out a broad-shouldered, tanned man in the front row of the pressbox.

"Don't let Steve hear that I even mentioned it," Del confided. "But there is quite a flavor of Rose Bowl here today. The big gentleman down there is from the University of Southern California. He's scouting us just in case it should be U.S.C. versus Michigan at Pasadena January first. Come on down, and I'll introduce you to the Ohio scout. He has been telling me that he knows your dad."

The Ohio scout was a middle-aged man with keen eyes in a pleasant, full face. His eyes lighted up and his smile made Dick feel that he was sincerely happy to meet him.

"Know your dad well," he said. "Theral and I have had some lively discussions on occasion concerning the relative merits of Michigan and Ohio football." His grin widened and a corner of his mouth lifted in a little quirk. "We disagree violently," he added dryly.

Del Gregon asked the Ohio scout if he objected to Dick sitting beside him. The quirky grin appeared again.

"Certainly not. I've got all the dope on Michigan I can get anyway. Got most of it last week at Minneapolis, just kind of jelling it today. Sit down, Thornley. Glad to have you."

The teams had come out for the second half. Dick and

the Ohio scout watched a quartet of bandmen—three trumpets and a trombone—that was being conducted by the cheerleaders to various sections around the Stadium. The quartet would play the famous *Michigan Fight Fanfare*, the cheerleaders would sway in time with the music and at the proper intervals leap into the air to lead the crowd in yelling *Fight*. It was an interesting spectacle. One was never quite aware of things like this when one was down on the field or on the bench.

The Ohio scout had no eyes for these events. He kept watching Navy men through high-powered binoculars, jotting things down in a notebook. He saw that Dick was interested.

"We play Navy next year," he explained. "A scout can't let an opportunity to get dope go by."

Dick said, "How the dickens does scouting work, anyhow?"

The Ohio man smiled. "That's a pretty big question. I've heard the scout referred to as the intelligence section of the football staff. As such, he gathers all the pertinent information that he can legitimately get about the personnel, general style of play, type of offense and defense, forward passers, punters, field goal kickers, just about everything and everybody on a rival football squad."

The scout tapped the cardboard cover of a thin book before him. It was big enough to take an 8½-by-11-inch sheet of paper. The cover was lettered "Scout Report."

"We use this book at Ohio," he said. "Every coaching staff has its own, I suppose, but essentially they are all pretty much the same." He leafed through the booklet. "Preliminaries," he read. "During game. After game. Punters. Place-kickers or drop-kickers. Kickoff formations.

Kickoff men. Running plays. Defenses used against running plays. Passers. Pattern of pass offense. Pass defense. Offensive generalship. Defensive generalship. Just anything and everything that might help your team to prepare for the game against the team you are scouting is covered in the scouting report."

Dick hesitated, then blurted out, "Do you look for individual—ah—differences?"

The scout gave him a sharp glance.

"Like whether or not a fellow's goat can be got? Or whether he can be kidded into falling prey to a sucker play?" The scout's quirky grin flashed briefly. "Well, I'll tell you. No scout would be guilty of snooping into a boy's private life to get something on him. On the other hand, the old saw that all is fair in love and war applies to football, in a way. Football is a kind of miniature war. If a scout sees some flaw in a man's play, some tipoff that will give his men an edge, he surely uses it. If he sees that somebody loses his head when he's needled, he notes that.

"Then there is a kind of grapevine, too. Don't ask me how it works. Maybe sports writers are the agents. Maybe officials let remarks drop. Maybe players themselves pass along information. It's a fact that if Joe Whoosis does something in a game against Mudville U this week, and two weeks later he plays against Dry Gulch Tech, it's ten to one that the Dry Gulch Tech team will know all about the thing that he did in the Mudville game."

The scout flipped open the report form booklet, turned pages until he came to one headed "Defense of Linebackers" (right and left). The report was not filled in. He pointed to the questions listed.

"You're a line-backer," he said. "Take a look at the things we want to know about you.

Dick read:

1. Primarily do they protect inside or outside?
2. Are they active outside or between the tackles?
3. Can we draw them out and then go down the middle?
4. Do they diagnose plays well?
5. Do they tackle with determination?
6. Do they vary their play?
7. Do they have any outstanding idiosyncrasies that we can utilize?

The scout said, "We cover the water front pretty well, you see. We answer similar questions about every position, offense and defense."

The game began down on the field, and Dick kept his eyes fastened on the Navy fullback. But at the back of his mind was a thought that had nothing to do with the Navy game.

Purdue and Ohio scouts would have passed on to their squads the weaknesses and strong points of Michigan men. Dick Thornley was going to have to do something about Dick Thornley's vulnerability to needling.

He drew in a long breath. If he *could* do something. But what?

. . . Have you ever considered getting together with Bart Jensen and threshing things out? . . .

Dick let out the long breath, and his mouth line tightened as words his dad had said flashed through his mind. Doggone it, how could a fellow go and thresh things out with a guy who would do what Bart Jensen had done in that Chicago sportsheet thing—and then lie about it. Or as good as lie about it. He hadn't been man enough to 'fess up to Steve, had he?

XXI

Touchdown Against Purdue

CRUNCH, CRUNCH; crunchety-crunch. Crunch, crunch; crunchety-crunch. Cleats bit into the macadam of the tunnel floor. There was a smell of sweaty bodies and the squeak of leather pads. It was a warm day for mid-November. The words Steve Foster had just said in the dressing room lingered in Dick's mind.

" . . . They'll score, remember that. They're offensive-minded. Kolo won the toss, and we're receiving. Give it everything you've got right from the whistle. . . ."

An official blew the whistle. The starting team was quickly surrounded by the rest of the squad. Steve was in the middle; then he worked his way outside the circle. Everybody crowded close.

"Everybody get hot today, gang . . . give it to 'em, pour on the coal . . . go right from the whistle, huh? . . . the old fight, gang . . . the old pepper. . . ."

The kickoff. A high floating kick. Earl Crowe took the ball just short of the five-yard line. Linemen dropped back to form a V of interference. Purdue was wearing white jerseys with black numerals and three black horizontal stripes around the upper sleeves, white pants, and gold helmets striped with three black lines from front to back.

Michigan blockers were hitting. White-clad men were being mowed down, and golden helmets were plowing into the turf. The great crowd in the Stadium was pulled to its feet; Michigan adherents yelled wildly as Earl found a path down the east sideline. "He's going all the way," they yelled.

Only a single man had a chance to get Earl. He was picking up interference. The men who had made one block got up and raced downfield. They continued to block as long as they could see wrong-colored jerseys upright. "He's going to make it!" The yelling increased, encouraging Earl to run the ball back for a touchdown from the kickoff.

The Purdue tackler played carefully, angling, giving ground to tighten the angle. It looked as though he were going to cut Earl off at the twenty. But he didn't get Earl. A blue helmet with maize front and vertical maize stripes caught glints of the November sun as a head ducked and a husky blue-jerseyed figure threw himself in front of the Purdue man. They went down in a tangle of bodies as Earl flashed safely past. Earl turned on every last ounce of speed as he rode the roar from the Michigan side on down the sideline and into the end zone.

Touchdown!

"Oh boy, oh boy, oh boy, did 'ja see that Earl pick 'em up and lay 'em down! . . . Wow! Ninety-four yards! . . . How do you like that, huh, a touchdown from the kickoff! . . . Man, man, there was *blocking* on that run! . . . Perfect. Did 'ja see Mike take out that last Purdue guy? Wham! . . ."

Michigan squad members pounded each other on the back. The teams were lining up for the try-for-point. Steve

Foster spoke quietly, but his voice cut through the joyous hubbub.

"Defensive unit in there," Steve said. "Dick Thornley, over here a minute."

Dick grabbed his helmet, stood before the headcoach. Steve laid a hand on his shoulder.

"You're going out there to stay a while," Steve said. "Give it all you have, confound it!"

His feet couldn't be touching the ground, Dick knew as he raced out. Mike Flaherty grinned at him. Dick didn't think of it at the time but later he remembered that there were beads of sweat on Mike's forehead, and he was massaging his shoulder and wiggling it.

Justin booted the ball squarely over the crossbar. The lights opposite "Michigan" on the electric scoreboards high above the rims of the Stadium at north and south ends blinked to show a big 7. The Purdue lights registered a zero.

Justin stayed in for the kickoff. He approached the ball and, just as he reached it, Pete Byrne, holding for the kick, dropped the ball so that the axis was horizontal to the ground. The kick was low and twisting and tough to handle. A Purdue man picked it up, bungled it, grabbed frantically at the elusive oval. R. E. hit the Purdue man with a clean, hard tackle. R. E.'s smashing bulk drove the Purdue man backward, and something golden flashed in the sun a brief instant before it rolled on the green turf along the Purdue thirty-yard line.

"Ball! . . . ball! . . . fumble, that's not a helmet . . . ball . . ."

Dick dove. He was remembering things that Labadie and Heavy Carr and Steve and Jerry Etteboon had harped

on about falling on the ball “. . . you don't *fall* on the ball. If you do, the thing will probably squirt away from you . . . make a sled out of your hips and legs and side and slide into the ball . . . grab it and squeeze it and treasure it as though it were gold . . . wrap your arms and shoulders and hips and legs and everything you've got around it . . . pull your head in, there are going to be other men after it and they won't be gentle when they land on you. . . .”

Dick clutched the spinning ball and dragged it into the basket of his abdomen and legs. He hunched his shoulders. Then it seemed to him that ten tons of diving flesh and bone and pads had landed on him. But when the referee dug to the bottom of the pile, the ball was safely tucked against his jersey, and a great roar swelled from the Michigan side.

“First and ten, Michigan,” the referee shouted. He waved his hand toward the Purdue goal, took his place behind the Michigan huddle.

Teammates slapped Dick on the seat of the pants and thumped his ribs. “Nice goin’, Dick. Nice goin’, I say. . . . The way to look alive. . . .” One bit of praise hit Dick’s ears that he could hardly believe he had actually heard. “Sharp stuff, Thornley. Hah! The old Ann Arbor fight!” And Jensen’s tone was not razzing or sarcastic.

“We got a break,” Pete Byrne said in the huddle. “We’re going to keep right on top of it. 26B.”

T formation with the quarterback tight behind the center. “Hep!” A backfield shift to a single wing strong to the right, unbalanced line strong to the right. Pete Byrne barked, “One! Two! Three!” R. E. snapped the ball on the two count.

It spat into Dick's hands just right. He drove two steps forward, stopped on a dime, dropped his right foot the way Labadie had been drilling him all week, and pivoted. Bart Jensen flashed past from the wingback spot. A Purdue man yelled, "Reverse! Reverse! Watch that wingback reverse!" Dick completed his spin and knifed for the hole that Shane and Hank Gross had opened inside the tackle spot.

The hole was wide and yawning, and Dick high-kneed through and churned slantwise into the secondary. He drove with all the power he owned. Kolo had swung out of his guard spot, and his shoulder block effectively disposed of the first line backer. Another Purdue tackler slammed to the turf, his grasping hands short of Dick's legs. Bart Jensen had come on through after the fake, and Jensen put a good cross-body block on the defensive man.

Dick tore for the end zone. The major portion of his concentration was on sizing up the safety man and a half-back racing in from the opposite side, but a part of his mind was on that block Jensen had thrown.

It was going to be close, that race with the Purdue safety man. Dick did not really remember the drilling Labadie had given him and the other backs in swerving his hips one way then driving another. He did it instinctively and luckily at the right instant. The Purdue man was at a disadvantage; the tackler always is in such a situation. He started to follow Dick's feint, and it was fatal to his chances. He could not reverse in time. His hand swatted at Dick, slapped his thighs, but it did not even stagger Dick.

He was in the end zone. He was conscious of the cheer-

leaders leaping and turning flips and handsprings, and he grinned a crazy grin. Then suddenly it hit him with full impact.

He'd made a *Touchdown!* From scrimmage! It was different from the time he'd intercepted a pass against Northwestern.

Teammates pounded his back and shoulders. He grinned. It was a great feeling. Dick caught a glimpse of Bart Jensen, and there seemed to be almost a friendliness in Jensen's black eyes before the wingback turned away.

Things blurred in Dick's mind. The Chicago newspaper piece . . . the Northwestern thing . . . jibes Jensen had thrown at different times. Then the jubilant cries of teammates drowned out Dick's thoughts.

"Hey, who said these Boilermakers were so tough! . . . Where is this big bad Purdue offense? . . . What d' you say, gang, let's get that ball and roll to another touchdown. . . ."

It was Michigan, 14; Purdue, 0. But the game was young.

XXII

A Sports Writer Asks a Question

SPECS COOK chuckled, reached behind him, and made a wad of the pillow on his bed. He pushed his glasses higher on the bridge of his nose. Sunday papers were strewn all over the room, but the piece that Specs held was the sportsheet of Flash Flager's paper.

"That Flager," Specs said. "Did you read his column, Dick?"

"Not the column, only his running account of the game."

"Well, get a load of this." Specs began reading.

. . . Old Flash was unpopular in the pressbox Saturday. Fearless Flager predicted, when Michigan left the field at the end of the half, that Purdue would come back and score more points in the third quarter than Michigan had on the board at that time—namely, 14.

This statement roused aloud and raucous disagreement—not to say rebuke—from Michigan supporters.

Then Fearless Flager took another deeper look into his crystal ball and came up with the further prediction that Michigan's Rose Bowl Special would not be derailed by the Boilermakers and would prove in a fighting fourth quarter that they are the logical representatives for the Western Conference at Pasadena next January 1. Purdue supporters guffawed. Well???

"You know," Specs said, "Flager is my kind of guy. He wears the loudest, most atrocious clothes I ever saw anybody wear, but all the same . . ."

Specs broke off and answered a rap on the door.

A slender little man, underweight but developing a bay window, stood in the doorway. He had on a violent purple shirt that was made brighter by the contrast of a brilliant orange tie. The ensemble topped a pair of multicolored checked pants and a mouse-hued corduroy sport jacket. Little red veins showed in the sallow cheeks of Flash Flager, and he blinked indeterminate brown eyes that were embellished by prominent puffy bags.

"Speak of the great," Specs said. "We were just reading your stuff. Come in, Flash."

Flash Flager grinned, made a large gesture toward the pile of newspapers.

"No use wasting dough buying the others," he said. "Read Flager and you've read it all."

He came in, removed a tan hat that had a red feather stuck behind the fawn-colored band. He smoothed back thinning brown hair and said, "Hi, Dick. How does it feel to be a hero?"

Dick said nothing. He moved uneasily.

"Boy, was that a ballgame or was that a ballgame!" Flager whistled. "I've been covering football more than twenty years, and I don't recall any thirty minutes of any game that was as wild and wooly and full of fleas as that second half Saturday."

Flager ticked off on his fingers.

"Purdue receives, runs the ball back to midfield, throws one pass that sure catches us with our defenses down, kicks the point after the touchdown and bingo—they're

back in the ballgame. We receive. The Purdue guys must have been given liquid dynamite intravenously between halves. They swarm all over us. They force us to punt. It takes them exactly seven plays to cover seventy yards and with less than five minutes of the period gone, they tie the score.

"The pressbox is nuts after that second Purdue touchdown. Leads that sports writers thought fairly safe have to be revised. But before they can get them to their wire men and relayed to their papers, Purdue has scored again. Man, man, if that Boilermaker passer didn't set a record with seven consecutive completed pitches, he must have at least tied one. Three touchdowns and twenty-one points in nine minutes!"

Flager paused dramatically. "You read my column, didn't you? Well, about that time, old Fearless Flager was getting some awesome glances thrown his way. I have to admit that old Fearless began to have some bad moments himself when Purdue recovered that fumble and roared to their fourth touchdown, and the clock showed nearly two minutes left of the period. Four touchdowns in thirteen minutes. 28-14 against us on the scoreboard. I didn't feel so good."

Flager clapped Dick on the shoulder then and grinned.

"The old Sophomore Sockeroo got to going in that last period and made Fearless Flager's predictions look mighty good. That's what I mean by asking you how it feels to be a hero, Dick."

"I don't feel much like a hero."

"You sure should. For my dough, that tackle you made on Enright when he'd caught the pass and was headed for paydirt was the turning point. No wonder he fumbled!

We could feel the jar of that tackle up in the pressbox. I'll bet Enright's ancestors felt it.

"I'd take that bull charge you rammed down the Boiler-makers for our tying touchdown, too. Did you know that you hit the line at the eleven-yard line and that a Purdue tackler had you stopped on the eight—only you didn't stop—and two more socked you inside the five? Boy, you literally carried three Purdue tacklers over the line with you.

"And that fifth touchdown! Of course, Bart Jensen carried the ball over the line, but it was your spin-buck that cashed two desperately needed yards for the first down on the twelve. Yep, chum, you're sure enough the hero of that ballgame. How would you like to be featured in another article this week?"

"I wouldn't like it," Dick said. "Look: I'm not unappreciative. Maybe I did look good in spots Saturday. But I keep remembering that it was my fumble that Purdue recovered to set up their fourth touchdown."

Flager said, "Bushwa! The final score was Michigan, 35; Purdue, 28. That's the thing to remember. Michigan is still Rose Bowl bound—and Dick Thornley played a big part. That's what I told Steve after the game."

Specs Cook said, "One of your rival sports writers had a bit about that in his color column. He wrote that Steve Foster threatened to heave you out of the dressing room because you were throwing around talk about the Rose Bowl. You going to bring suit for libel?"

Flager waved a hand in large gesture.

"Jealousy, just plain jealousy," he said. "Steve may have indicated his preference for no Rose Bowl talk, I don't remember. Steve is careful always to look cool and calm

but he's a bundle of taut nerves inside. I know that. I make allowances. Steve wouldn't have old Flash thrown out. It wouldn't do any good—I'd be right back!"

Dick did not join in his roommate's laughter. He was eyeing Flager. The sports writer looked at him and was suddenly serious.

"A newspaperman gets around, chum," he said to Dick. "And nosiness is an occupational disease with us. I've been nosey about that Chicago newspaper piece ever since it came out.

"I dug around a bit, Thornley. I know for sure that what you've been thinking is wrong—just as wrong as what Bart Jensen has been thinking. Neither one of you put out a thing to that Chicago crumb. Nobody put out anything to the crumb. I use 'crumb' advisedly. Any newspaperman who fakes stuff and runs it as the straight dope is a crumb.

"That's what that guy did, Thornley. Bart Jensen gave him no more satisfaction than you did. He faked that whole story."

Flager held the door open a moment before he left.

"That's why I really came up here today," he said. "Why don't you and Jensen quit acting like a pair of stubborn kids and get together?"

XXIII

A Solid Citizen

“**H**ow’s FOR gettin’ off my feet, Gross?”

“Are those feet? I thought somebody had left the film boxes in the aisle!”

“Holy cow, quit wiggling. You’re as bad as Labbiel!”

“Why don’t we get on with the flicker?”

“Hope there’s a Mickey Mouse today.”

“Yeah, something different for a change.”

It was not a Mickey Mouse, but it was different. Steve Foster told the squad briefly why they were not going to see the movies of the Purdue game.

“We’re proud of you, Leo and Labadie and Etteboon and myself. You came back Saturday the way a true champion does. They had you on the floor, and the referee was ready to start the long count and you got up and fought back. We’re proud of you. But let’s say that the Purdue game is over and done.

“Today you’re going to look at the movies of last year’s Ohio game. Especially we want you to watch their defensive maneuvers. They gave us plenty of trouble last year, and they’ll give us more trouble this year. All right, start it off, Batt.”

Batt Batterson, official movie man for the football team

as well as varsity hockey coach, started the projector whirring.

From time to time, Steve Foster or Heavy Carr or Labadie or Etteboon requested the film be stopped while they pointed out some feature of the Ohio defense.

"It's a flexible, floating defense . . . see, they change to a five-man line, or even a three-man line and four-line backers . . . they change from a diamond to a square secondary defense and then when you count on that you'll find they're playing an individual man-for-man setup . . . it's plenty tricky. Scout reports show that they have refined and developed it until it's liable to drive you screwy. . . ."

The movie ended. It was clear from the film why Marion Frances Kolodzieyczk had been selected as All American guard after that Ohio game the year before. Kolo had been anybody's All American that day against Ohio. And Barry Shane had been close behind Kolo. Dick was wondering whether Michigan would be as good against the Buckeyes this year. Then he was aware that Del Gregon was in front of the squad and was talking. The publicity director puffed out his cheeks and ran a hand over his thin hair.

"I'm not quite sure just how I got this job," Del said. "Steve thought it might be a good idea for you fellows to get steeped a little in Ohio-Michigan tradition, and he felt I could do it.

"I'm not sure that Ohio is our dearest enemy. They would run a close race with Minnesota, perhaps. But I am quite sure that Michigan is Ohio's dearest enemy. They would rather beat Michigan than any team on their schedule. The downtown quarterbacks on High Street in

Columbus are rough on coaches when they lose a couple of games to Michigan."

Del Gregon puffed out his cheeks.

"The Ohio-Michigan rivalry goes back to 1897," he went on. "Michigan gave the Buckeyes a 36-0 trimming that year. But the next meeting—1900—resulted in a scoreless tie. It wasn't until 1919 that Ohio succeeded in defeating Michigan. Chic Harley, an Ohio immortal who ranks in Columbus on a comparable basis with our own Willie Heston, beat us that day with a sparkling forty-two-yard touchdown run. We spoiled the dedication of Ohio's new stadium in 1922 by taking them to the cleaners, 19-0.

"Perhaps one of the most thrilling battles in the all-time series came in Michigan Stadium in 1941. A packed stadium—usual for Ohio-Michigan games whether in Ann Arbor or Columbus—sat limp and satiated with thrills at the final gun. Ohio scored in the first, third, and fourth periods. They were a touchdown ahead in the final quarter when Michigan took the kickoff and drove all the way for the tying touchdown. The game ended 20-20."

Again Del Gregon stopped briefly, puffed out his cheeks, smoothed his hair.

"Through the years," he said, "it has always been throw away the form sheet for Michigan-Ohio games. I could go on and on. There was the disputed kickoff in a game at Columbus that gave Ohio the Conference championship. We had the Buckeyes trimmed after a great fourth-quarter drive that put us out in front. We kicked off. It was a short kick, and arguments went on for weeks as to whether the Michigan strategy had been a short, on-side kick with the idea of recovering and freezing possession.

Ohio went on to make the touchdown that won for them. I can assure you that the instructions from the bench that day were to kick the ball as deep as possible. The kick was simply fozzled. But the Michigan coaching staff took the blame rather than embarrass the man who did the kicking off.

"And so on down the line. There have been years when Michigan came down to the Ohio game with a better season record—and lost. There have been years when an underdog Michigan squad upset the Buckeyes. One thing you can be sure of, it will be a football game next Saturday in Columbus."

Del Gregon sat down. Steve Foster said quietly, "I'd like you to remember just that—it will be a football game next Saturday, that's all. Relax. Don't start worrying or fretting or allowing pressure to build up in you. All right, that's all. Everybody wear heavy equipment for tomorrow's workout."

As Dick was leaving the room, he heard Heavy Carr speak to Steve Foster in an undertone.

"Good psychology, Steve, telling them to relax and not to think of the Ohio game as anything special."

"I wasn't trying psychology, Leo. We'll play our best if we are loose and relaxed and not bearing down on the fact that an undefeated season and some other things rest on the Ohio game."

Steve Foster's long, angular face was very sober.

"No, Leo, I lay no claim to being a psychologist. I don't need to point out the results I've had this year from trying a psychological angle on one of our knottiest problems."

"Yeah." Heavy Carr looked up at the headcoach and the features of the line coach were twisted in a frown. "I

know what you mean. But there's still hope, Steve. Seems to me that there is a different attitude . . ."

Heavy Carr saw Dick, abruptly broke off his sentence, inclined his head to Dick as he passed.

Dick knew as well as though the line coach had finished his sentence that the coaches were talking about him and Bart Jensen. He came to a decision that had been knocking around in the back of his mind for quite a while. He squared his shoulders. No time like the present. Outside the building he looked around, saw Bart Jensen talking with Captain Kolo.

Dick walked over to Kolo and Jensen. Kolo said, "Hi, Dick." Jensen jerked around. His black eyes held a sudden surprise. He nodded, did not say anything.

"Hi," Dick said. Then to Jensen: "When you're ready to leave, I'd like to walk a way with you." He swallowed. This was not so easy. "There are some things we ought to get out of our systems, I guess."

Marion Frances Kolo peered quickly at Dick, shifted his gaze to Jensen and then back to Dick.

"That," the varsity captain said dryly, "is the year's prize understatement." He clapped a hand on the shoulder of each. "A talk between you two is long over due. I'll be seeing you, guys."

Kolo left. Dick and Jensen turned up State Street. They had passed the gates of Old Ferry Field, scene of many historic Michigan football battles before Michigan Stadium was built, before either of them spoke.

"I owe you an apology," Dick said finally. "I—I thought you must have talked with that Chicago sports writer. I was wrong."

"Hah! Maybe we better say times two on the apology

business and call it good, Thornley. I thought the same thing about you—and I was wrong.”

“Guess a fellow can be wrong on a lot of things.”

“Hah, you can say that a few times!”

They walked on. Funny, Dick was thinking. We haven’t actually said much but I feel different. Must be the things we aren’t saying. It was Jensen who broke the odd silence that held them.

“Yep,” he said, “a guy can get a wrong slant on plenty of things. I had a wrong slant on your old—I mean on Prof. Thornley. He’s a pretty good egg, and he says what he means. I know now that he flunked me in psych because I deserved to be flunked. Guess I knew it when it happened. Yep, a guy can get a wrong slant on plenty of things.”

“Guess I’ve had a wrong slant on plenty of things,” Dick said. “On you, for instance. Doggone it, I—I don’t aim to be a—a snob. I—I—oh, nuts!”

“Hah!” Bart Jensen’s square-cut face broke into a grin. “Look,” he said. “This is tough going, for me anyway. We could let our hair down and get kinda sticky and so what? We both know the score.”

His grin tightened a little and his black eyes gleamed.

“I’m a kind of wrong-side-of-the-track guy compared to your league,” Jensen said. “Not that I give you any superiority. But like I said, a guy can get a wrong slant and things can change. Hah! Why don’t we let it go that things have changed?”

Jensen’s and Dick’s hands shot out at the same instant. They gripped and it was a good, firm, man’s grip on both sides. They stood there grinning at each other like a couple of schoolboys making up after a quarrel. Suddenly they

both felt a little self-conscious. They dropped their hands and were both relieved when a hail came from across the street.

"Hey, Dick." It was Specs Cook. Specs gave no outward evidence that he was surprised to see his roommate and Bart Jensen in the buddy-buddy act. "How's for walking over to East Quad with me to return this book to Blubber? I'll need a witness that I brought it back."

Jensen said, "Hah, Blubber Yonker doesn't need a book—he's always talking. When would he read a book?" He lifted a hand, said to Dick, "Don't let those Greene House guys get you into a bull session, Thornley. I'll be seeing you."

When Dick joined his roommate across the street, Specs gave him a long look.

"Well," Specs said, "Flash Flager should have seen that. From your looks, I'd say that things seem to be getting under control. I'm glad, Dick."

Then, because Specs was not a prying person and perhaps because he was wiser than most youths his age, he changed the subject.

"I wasn't kidding about wanting a witness. That Blubber is the darndest guy. He's hippped on the subject of current novels—among others. He'll insist that you lug off one of the latest books he got from one of the half-dozen book clubs he belongs to, then loan it out to another guy when you bring it back, forget you brought it back, and then expect you to dig it up when you don't have it."

"Well, that's a little involved, but I guess I get what you mean," Dick said.

They came to East Quad, turned in at the Greene House entrance. They climbed the stairs to a second-floor room

and knocked. Somebody yelled, "C'mon in, unless you're the house mother!"

The room was crowded. Half a dozen boys occupied the chairs and the beds. A very fat boy with no shirt on was perspiring and waving his arms as Specs and Dick entered. Blubber Yonker, almost without interrupting the flow of words he was pouring out, said in a kind of aside, "Hi, Specs. Thornley, isn't it? Make yourselves comfortable . . . and Ohio has one guy in their backfield that will give Michigan more fits than a mad cat. Oh, golly, Thornley, I forgot you were here. But that's the dope, anyway."

A laugh went through the group. Somebody said, "Gosh, Blubber, you've been reading a newspaper! Thought you only went in for novels?"

"Naw, it's *modern* literature Blubber's squirrely over. What's more modern than a newspaper?"

"Of course you're talking about Nusbaum, Blubber. Too bad there isn't a Conference rule against Jews playing football."

The room was suddenly quiet. The boys glanced at one another uneasily. Blubber looked steadily at the fellow who had made the observation about the Ohio Sophomore star.

"I just don't go for that crack, Mueller," he said. "To put it mildly, I think it is entirely uncalled for and in darn poor taste."

A sardonic smile quirked the thin lips of the stocky youth who lounged on the radiator beside the window. Mueller was a rather handsome young man with very blond hair, cool blue eyes, and an arrogant expression. He shrugged.

"Sorry," he said carelessly. "I didn't know I was in a bunch of Jew-lovers."

"Nobody said anything about any kind of lovers. Holy cow, what are you trying to do, kick up a row?"

"Just what's wrong with Jewish people?" someone asked.

"Yeah, where do you get off lambasting Nusbaum because he's a Jew?"

A nasty, superior smile wreathed Mueller's face. He said, "You never had to live around them or you wouldn't have to ask."

"Nuts! I know some Jewish fellows and they're just like anybody else."

"Yeah, where do you get off preaching that stuff, Mueller? If we're going to sink to name-calling, there are some tags that have been hung on Germans that don't sound so nice!"

"Hey, what gives, you guys! This is only a friendly bull session!"

"Break it off. We don't want anyone to get hurt."

Specs Cook said, "Dick, we have a couple of Jewish boys in our house. What do you think of them?"

Dick Thornley looked at his roommate in surprise. His brown eyes suddenly snapped as they grew wide. Specs wondered whether Dick was amused or angry. That snapping glint in his eyes was a sign of one or the other emotion. Then Dick's heavy brows drew together and when he spoke his tone was puzzled.

"Why, so we have," he said. "Goldman and Pudge Friedberg. Gosh, I never thought of them one way or the other. I mean as Jewish. They're just the same as anybody else in the house!"

"Do you mean to say that you and Cook *live* with Jews!" Mueller's voice held an incredulous disbelief.

Dick's eyes snapped violently now. "What college are you in, Mueller?" he asked.

"Why, Liberal Arts. Why?"

"Then maybe you have taken some social science courses? History or sociology or maybe economics?"

"Of course. I'm a social science major. What the . . ."

"And you believe in One World?" Dick broke in on Mueller. "You concede that the hope of the world is some sort of United Nations?"

"Well, sure." Mueller was not looking quite so superior now. He saw what was coming but he was trapped. He tried to wiggle off the hook. "I'm not arguing that Jews don't have a place. I'm maintaining that they shouldn't be allowed to . . ."

"Then you haven't a leg to stand on," Dick broke in again, "if you're going to be consistent. The idea that there is any one—or two, or three, or four—superior races or religious creeds or what have you is simply archaic."

For a few seconds after Dick stopped talking the room was very quite. Then somebody chuckled, and a dry voice said in a hoarse whisper, "Tell me what archaic means, Frank. Then I'll know what gives."

Wisecracks and laughter replaced the tension that had held the group. A couple of men got up and left, and it was clear that the bull session was over.

Blubber sidled next to Dick Thornley.

"Thanks," the chubby youth said. "You handled that with neatness and dispatch. I never can argue with that guy. He gets me so mad that I get all balled up, then he twists things that I say till I don't know whether I'm pro or con on my own argument. It'll do him good to be set down once by a man who carries a little weight."

On the way back to their room, Specs suddenly laughed aloud. Dick looked at his roommate.

"What's so funny?" he asked.

"You. You're the darndest contrast I ever saw. You're so darn leary of yourself, and everybody on the campus looks up to you. Do you know that you're one of the select few who ever shut Mueller up and made it stick? Incidentally, you're a pretty solid citizen, Dick. You think things through and—and—well, I'll be darned!"

Specs looked disgustedly at the book he still carried in his hand.

"I forgot to leave the blamed book! Oh well, guess old Doc Cook got too wound up listening to you put Mueller in his place and thinking how swell it was to see you and Jensen together without chips on either shoulder.

"I sure hope it lasts, Dick. I sure do."

XXIV

Tension Again

TENSION HAD been building up and tightening all week. The team had felt it in classrooms and on the campus. Dick had felt it growing inside himself, and he knew from the jump-down-your-throat tempers of other men that it had been building up and tightening in the whole squad.

It had not lessened even now that they were in a country club a few miles outside of Columbus. The squad would go into the city that afternoon for a brief workout on the stadium gridiron and then busses would whisk them back to the country club, where they would try desperately to forget that the next day they would be out there with tens of thousands of roaring football fanatics egging them on.

The busses that brought the Michigan squad to the Ohio Stadium came around the end of the great steel and concrete horseshoe.

"Boy, it's quite a stadium, huh?" Bart Jensen said. It was his first view of the place. "How come there are windows all along on the outside? Hey, that sign says Scioto Club . . . there's another, Buckeye Club . . . and Stadium Club. What goes on, do guys live in there?"

Somebody said, "How about it, Dick? Your folks live down here, you ought to know. Do fellows live in the Stadium?"

Dick nodded.

"All under the upper deck on this side, four floors high," he said. "Dad and I went through one of the clubs last summer. They looked pretty nice. Double and triple beds in good-sized rooms and recreation rooms, showers, study halls—just about like a fraternity house."

"That's where Ohio houses their athletes, huh? No wonder they get so many good high school men!"

"No, that isn't fair. There may be some athletes who live in stadium clubs, but there are a lot more guys who live there who aren't athletes. The University doesn't intend to make money on fellows who live in stadium clubs. It gives those who don't have too much financial assistance a break. The University just utilizes what would be waste space. There are classrooms on the opposite side under the upper deck."

"Gosh, they ought to have plenty of space. It's sure a big stadium. Is it bigger than ours?"

"Nope. But they add extra bleachers on the open end and hang people from skyhooks, I guess. Somebody told me, or I read somewhere, that they had 90,411 people present once at a Michigan game."

"Well, this one *looks* bigger than ours. Probably because it stands right up in the air from level ground while ours is sort of a sunken bowl."

The Michigan squad was still comparing Ohio's stadium with the Michigan plant when the busses stopped outside the west tower. Dressing quarters for visitors were on the ground floor of the west tower of the open end of the

Stadium. Ohio's quarters were across the field in the east tower.

It was a spacious dressing room. Lockers lined the east, west sides, and north end. There were more than fifty of them. There were ample shower facilities.

"Gosh," Whitey Donnels said. "This place makes the dressing rooms at our stadium look pretty crummy. Look at the showers—and tiled walls and floor! And we've got *four* at Michigan Stadium!"

"Aw, dry up and blow away," somebody growled. "Maybe you shoulda come to Ohio and they'da given you private accommodations!"

The tension again. They could not get away from it. Steve Foster knew very well the mental condition of his squad, too. The workout was little more than punting and passing to get the feel of the stadium wind currents, to get the feel of the stadium turf.

Then they were back into the busses, out to the country club. Steve sat in a big leather chair before the fireplace in the lounge of the clubhouse after dinner. He seemed calm and relaxed. Dick remembered what Flash Flager had said. He peered closely at Steve. There were tiny lines that one might miss if he weren't looking for them. Steve was calm and cool outside but a taut bundle of nerves inside.

Steve chuckled, leaned back in his chair. He talked to the boys around him as though he were an old sea captain regaling his audience with stories.

"Yessir," Steve said. "That Flager is something. You never can tell what he is going to be involved in next, but you can be sure it will be something out of the ordinary. He seems to draw trouble like a magnet attracts steel.

"And he has more brass pound for pound than a brass monkey. Take the time a few years back when we were playing Northwestern in Evanston, and Flash stayed in a downtown hotel gabbing until he just about had time to make Dyche Stadium for the kickoff.

"As you know, the elevated from downtown Chicago runs past Dyche Stadium about a block away. Flash took the el because he figured it would be quicker than a cab. When he got off, the street was packed with people and cars. But Flash was going to have a cab. He couldn't get one."

Steve chuckled. No one would have dreamed that any thought of an important football game lurked in his mind.

"Well, Flash ran out into the jammed street, picked out a private car with only the driver in it, opened the rear door, got in, and majestically ordered the driver to 'Take me to Dyche Stadium.'

"The owner of the car was a husky six-footer and weighed better than two hundred pounds. He was understandably surprised at Flager's order. He informed Flager that his car was no taxi. 'So what?' Flager inquired. 'Take me to Dyche Stadium, my good fellow.'"

Again Steve Foster laughed. Dick had to look closely to see the fine lines around his eyes.

"The driver threatened to punch Flager in the nose if he didn't get out of the car. Flager invited him to get out. When they were both out of the car and Flager squared off like a little bantam rooster, it struck the big man funny. Darned if he didn't drive Flager right up to the press gate!"

Steve Foster had just completed the yarn on Flager when the sports writer came into the lounge. He carried

an armful of newspapers. They were sportsheets of his newspaper. He handed them out.

"Wouldn't want you to go shy on your favorite literary diet, chums," Flager said. "Read Flager and you've read it all."

Across the top of the sportsheet in big black type was a headline.

WE'LL WIN—OHIO COACH STATES FLATLY.
MICHIGAN VICTORY STRING WILL BE SNAPPED
SATURDAY

Steve Foster glanced at the headline.

"Thanks," he said softly. "Thanks, Flager. I'm sure that is a fine note for the boys to retire on."

XXV

Ohio Game

“**G**ET YOUR pennants . . . show your colors . . . souvenirs . . . wear your colors . . . mums, get your mums here. . . .”

Hawkers lined the walks across the campus to the Stadium. There were displays of miniature footballs with Ohio ribbons and Michigan; pennants of scarlet and gray for Ohio; pennants of maize and blue for Michigan; great yellow chrysanthemums. People were already streaming toward the Stadium, two hours before the kickoff.

Columbus was a madhouse on big game days.

It took the busses that carried the Michigan squad a long time to thread their way through the heavy traffic. Finally they were in front of the outside door of the dressing room in the west tower.

Managers scurried around. Assistant trainers and Ben Benson taped and wrapped ankles. The usual hubbub filled the dressing room.

“How’s for some clean sweat socks? . . . Does a guy always have to beg for new shoelaces? . . . Hey, who hocked my good luck ch—never mind, it’s fastened to my shoulder pads. . . . Yeah, this Nusbaum is plenty good. They’re touting him for All American, and he’s only a

Sophomore. . . . How's the shoulder feel, Mike? . . ."

It did not seem to Dick as though they had been there long enough for the coaches to be urging them to hurry. Someone said it was almost one o'clock. Doggone, an hour went fast. It won't go so fast when the game starts, he thought. Or maybe it will. If you are behind and trying to score, the clock is jet-propelled. It slows to a crawl when you are ahead and trying to stave off the other team.

Dick noticed that the doors from the Ohio Stadium dressing room opened right onto the field. There was no long tunnel like the one at home. He trotted through the doorway, and a blast of sound smacked against his eardrums. He looked up and saw that the Stadium was nearly filled. Then a crashing roar rolled out to dwarf the greeting Michigan supporters gave them.

The Ohio squad came from the east tower door. They were wearing gray pants with a scarlet wedge down the backs of the legs. Bright scarlet jerseys. Gray numerals. They looked trim and fast. Cheerleaders flung themselves wildly about as they led the Ohio Fight cheer.

Yea, Team! Yea, Team! Yea, Team!
Fight! Fight! Fight!
Ohio, Rah; Ohio, Rah;
Rah, Rah, Ohio.
O—, Ohio; O—, Ohio
Rah, Rah, Rah, Rah, Ohio.

"Number 43, that's Nusbaum. . . . Yeah, he's greased lightning, and a real triple-threat. . . . They look confident, huh? . . . Well, did you expect them to ask if it's all right with us if they use part of the field! . . ."

Dick looked up in the stands. He couldn't see his parents, of course, but he knew they were up there. His mother

had wished him luck when he'd talked with her over the phone that morning. Maybe he'd need it.

Michigan cheerleaders performed exultant acrobatics. ". . . Yea Michigan! . . . Yea Michigan! . . . Yea Michigan. . . . Fight Team, Fight! . . ."

The Ohio-Michigan game. Color. Excitement. The Western Conference championship riding on the outcome. Ohio-Michigan.

Kolo trotted back from the middle of the gridiron.

"They won the toss," he said. "They chose to receive. We're defending the south goal."

So Ohio won the toss and refused to take the wind. There was a sharp breeze quartering from the southwest.

"They're confident," Steve Foster said quietly. "That headline Flager brought us showed that they're confident, and this proves it more. All right, defensive unit starts. That's all."

They bunched around Steve, clasped hands over and around his. Teammates who were not in the starting lineup surrounded them, poured encouragement at them.

"The old fight . . . go get 'em . . . take that thing away from 'em . . . the old jinegar . . . show 'em who's boss, gang . . . the old fight. . . ."

The referee queried the captains. There was a blast of the official's whistle. Butterflies were rampant in Dick's stomach. Justin's foot met the ball in a high end-over-end kick. A scarlet jersey hurtled at Dick, and he sidestepped and hand-fought the block. With the first contact the butterflies left. Then he dug his cleats into the turf. Nusbaum hadn't been overrated. R. E. had a clear shot

at him, and Nusbaum got away. They didn't often get away from R. E.'s tackles. Golly, get him! *Get him!*"

Nusbaum reversed his field. Ohio blockers cut off Michigan tacklers. A scarlet jersey drove at Dick, and he could not fight off the block. He was knocked staggering. The Ohio blocker kept driving. Dick shoved mightily and broke loose. He had no time to launch a tackle at Nusbaum. It was more a full body block. But it knocked the Ohio star out of bounds.

The ball was on the Michigan forty-five. If Nusbaum had been a step farther, or that block been just a little tighter! It would have been an all-the-way runback.

"Here's where we take these Wolverines loose from their claws! . . . Let's see what makes 'em tick. . . . Pour on the coal, gang, pour on the coal, they're no supermen! . . ."

Ohio trotted briskly from the huddle, chattered defiant fight talk. They worked from a T formation. They wasted no time. The first play was a quick-opener inside tackle, and Nusbaum shot through the slit of an opening and into the secondary unbelievably fast. He was past R. E. He swerved and a blocker sideswiped Dick just enough so that Dick's clawing grasp was knocked loose from Nusbaum. He went fourteen yards before Earl Crowe got him.

Five-man line this time. Changed blocking angles didn't seem to bother Ohio. Handoff to the right halfback—no! A fake. A lateral to Nusbaum. "Get that guy! Get him!"

Nusbaum drove to the twenty-yard stripe before he was downed. Another first down.

"Dig in, guys. Charge. You gotta charge!" Dick and R. E. slapped linemen on the seats of their pants. "Bam!

Doggone, these guys explodel! That fullback off-tackle slant was *fast*. Another quick-opening drive inside tackle. First down. It's inside our ten, guys! We gotta stop 'em!"

Michigan did not stop the Ohio drive. In just seven plays Ohio had covered the forty-five yards, and Nusbaum was in the end zone. The Ohio kicker came in and booted a perfect conversion point.

Ohio, 7; Michigan, 0.

Less than three minutes gone!

Michigan received. Earl Crowe carried back to the twenty-six. Everybody on the Michigan bench leaned forward. Now this cocky Ohio bunch would find out there were two sides to this record! "Feed it to 'em, Pete. Throw the book at 'em!"

Pete Byrne threw the book—and Ohio tossed it right back. They shifted defensive alignment constantly. They played everything from a four-man line to an eight-man line. They seemed to know exactly what to expect on every Michigan formation. Dick found the going hard.

He thought of the Ohio scout he had talked with the day of the Navy game . . . got all the dope on Michigan . . . just jelling it today. . . . He certainly had jelled things properly!

Ohio scored a second touchdown before the quarter was half over. Earl tried to angle his punt out of bounds, but Nusbaum thundered up like an express train, grabbed the bounding oval just short of the sideline. He brought it back fifteen yards to the Ohio thirty. Then that T attack struck with stunning force.

It looked like a run-of-the-mill sweep by the fullback. Guards pulled out of the line as though to lead the interference. Then abruptly the blockers in the vanguard of

the ball carrier were forming a cup defense, and the ball was flipped backward to Nusbaum. Too late the Michigan defense saw an Ohio end racing down the opposite sideline. There was not a blue jersey within twenty yards of him. He took Nusbaum's perfect pass over his shoulder, and he could have waltzed the remaining yardage into the end zone.

The successful kick made scoreboard figures change to Ohio, 14; Michigan, 0.

Captain Kolo called a timeout. Kolo at first stood and looked at his teammates for long seconds. Then he said just five words.

"Are we a Michigan team!"

Michigan went grimly to work. They dug in. They charged. They slowed the Ohio offense. But that Ohio defense still stymied the Michigan attack. It was still 14-0 on the scoreboard when R. E. Lee intercepted a pass in midfield with just over a minute left to play before the end of the half.

"Those cocky guys!" Pete Byrne raged in the huddle. "Passing on first down with a fourteen-point lead and time running out! They're insulting us. Let's go!"

They went as far as the twenty-nine. Then it was fourth down, and time left for but one play. Bob Justin came from the bench. Ohio was puzzled. They planned on a fake. They yelled warning of a fake. But Automatic Jus stood out there on the thirty-five and powered a field goal over the crossbar.

Ohio, 14; Michigan, 3, at the end of the half. You could hear the grandstand quarterbacks criticizing the Michigan strategy as you went into the dressing room. But Steve Foster was satisfied.

"If I'd wanted a fake, I would have sent Bob in to fake it," Steve said. "I wanted Pete to use his own judgment. I think it was good. The way we went this first half, we would probably not have scored a touchdown."

That was all Steve said until just before the squad left for the second half. Then Steve spoke quietly.

"You're a Michigan team. You have come back before. It is the mark of a champion to fight back, and I believe you are champions. This is the one we want; this is the one we have been gunning for. You are better than you looked out there, but you'll have to prove it. They pay off on final scores and it's in your laps."

Michigan received to start the second half—and Mike Flaherty fumbled on the twelve-yard line. Ohio recovered. Then the Michigan team really whipped the Ohio line that had outplayed them so badly during the first half.

Nusbaum was stopped on the quick-opener inside tackle. They piled up the fullback on the off-tackle slant. Nusbaum faked a pass, lateraled to the man-in-motion. Dick smothered him for a yard loss. The whole Michigan line surged through to smear Nusbaum on an attempted fourth down pass, and Michigan took possession of the ball on the fifteen.

Heavy Carr and Labbie met the defensive men at the sideline as they came out, slapped them on their backs. "We whipped those guys right there. . . . We're on the way. . . . Watch us roll. . . ."

Mike Flaherty through center and a yawning hole. Mike churned to the thirty. Bart Jensen grabbed the ball on a wingback reverse and squirmed and twisted to the forty-two. Ohio stopped Earl Crowe, but Earl did not have the ball. He had lateraled to Flaherty in one of those

exhibitions of ball-handling legerdemain that Steve Foster had taught. Flaherty was not knocked down until he was over the Ohio thirty.

The Ohio secondary defense came in closer. They shifted to an eight-man line. Pete Byrne had been waiting for this. Pete called a button-hook pass play. Earl Crowe snapped the ball squarely into Jensen's hands, and Jensen pivoted from the arms of a tackler and scooted diagonally for the corner of the end zone. He made it—just. Automatic Bob Justin came in and swung that right leg, and the scoreboard registered Ohio, 14; Michigan, 10.

Michigan was very much back in the ballgame.

Now Ohio started a drive. They carried the ball from the kickoff on a sustained march to the Michigan thirty-five before the drive bogged. They punted over the goal line. Michigan went on the offensive and for a few plays seemed to have regained the smooth-working, co-ordinated attack that had characterized their play all season. But the Ohio shifting defense threw monkey wrenches into the high-g geared offense.

Neither team scored further during the third period. Michigan had possession of the ball in midfield when the final quarter was about two minutes old. Steve Foster suddenly called for Dick. Dick crouched before the coach.

"You're going in there in place of Flaherty," Steve said. "You're going to rip that Ohio line to shreds. Tell Pete I want him to work you on straight power drives as often as you can take it. This Ohio team is young. They're cocky and a bit on the fancy-Dan side. We'll find out how they react to old-fashioned power."

Dick raced out on the field. He gave Pete Byrne Steve's instructions. Pete's eyes glinted as he nodded. "Smart,"

he said. "Rock 'em and sock 'em, Dick. It's yours every time until you want a breather."

Dick knew that he would never forget those next four minutes. He took the center snap direct from R. E., and he rammed into a slit inside the Ohio tackle. He battered through for four yards. Again. No fancy ball handling, no finesse. Just sheer, raw drive. He made three. The Ohio defense thought it was time for something different. They went into a five-man line. Dick hit over guard, and there was a wide opening. Kolo slammed down a line backer. Dick plowed and churned to the thirty-nine-yard line.

Wham! Through center for five. Zowie! A battering, crashing drive inside the Ohio left tackle. First down on the Ohio forty-eight. Ohio called a time out. Dick's teammates chattered at him. "Pour it to 'em . . . smack 'em down . . . the old Ann Arbor battle. Hah! . . . Show 'em the old rough-and-tough football. Rough-and-tough football, I say."

Time in. Pete Byrne injected a little finesse into the attack. He faked a handoff to Jensen and gave the ball to Dick. Dick bulled loose from a backer-up and rammed head down and cleats churning to the thirty before they dropped him.

Now the going got tough. Ohio dug in. Three yards over guard. Earl Crowe picked up four on a sweep, and the Ohio defense was forced to loosen a little. Back to Dick. A hammering, surging drive over Kolo's guard spot, and it was good for a first down on the eighteen.

Four bruising, battering smashes into the line. Dick carried on three of them. Michigan had a first down inside the ten. Goal to go. Ohio rooters yelled frantically.

"Hold that line! Hold that line! Hold that line!" Michigan partisans chanted, "Go! Go! Go!"

Dick was conscious of the chant. A fierce exultation gripped him. He felt as though he could plunge through a stone wall. He bored into a pile of scarlet jerseys. Again. His chest heaved now. Ohio's defense was ganging him. They were tough.

Pete Byrne looked at Dick in the huddle.

"We need this one," the quarterback said. "Can you do it, Dick?"

Somebody said, "They'll be looking for him. Why not try Jensen or Crowe? Or sneak it over yourself?"

"Dick's carried it this far," Pete Byrne said roughly. "It's his touchdown, if he thinks he can do it."

Afterward Dick searched his soul. He could honestly say that in that moment he had no thought of personal glory. He was just supremely confident that he could pierce the Ohio defense for the needed touchdown.

"I can do it," he said.

Pete Byrne nodded, said, "Give him an opening, you guys up front."

The ball came back from R. E., a perfect pass. It spatted into Dick's hands. The Michigan line heaved and surged as Dick hit a tiny opening with every ounce of drive that he owned. His legs pistoned and his cleats churned and dug and ripped the sod. The pile swayed forward and—suddenly Dick was clawing frantically for the ball. An elbow, a hand, a knee—something, had rammed the oval from his grasp. Sobs rasped Dick's throat as he fought to reach the golden oval. The ball trickled across the goal line. Dick could not break through the jam to fling himself at the ball. A pair of scarlet-clad arms

curled around the crazily bounding leather and swooped it into the basket of arms, body, and legs.

Ohio had recovered Dick's fumble.

The Michigan scoring drive was ended. It was a touch-back and Ohio's ball on their twenty-yard line.

"And you're the guy who had a wrong slant and knew it! Hah!"

Bart Jensen stood before Dick. Jensen's black eyes flashed.

"You had to be Big Stuff," he said bitterly. "You couldn't let anybody else make the touchdown! Hah! You'll never change! When the chips are down, you revert to type. It doesn't matter that you've lost us the ballgame. You make me . . ."

"Break it off! Shut up, Jensen!" The sharp command was from Captain Kolo. His face was grim. "This ballgame isn't lost! Get in there and take that ball away from them!"

Maybe Ohio was a little too complacent in the knowledge that they had stopped the Michigan drive. Maybe they thought that Michigan would be broken; maybe somebody missed an assignment in the blocking department. More likely it was the ferocious, savage drive of Kolo and Barry Shane. Whatever it was, the two Michigan stars crashed into an Ohio ball carrier so hard that the ball was knocked from his grasp on the first Ohio play—and ball-hawk R. E. recovered the fumble.

Dick prayed silently that Pete Byrne would give him another chance. But the decision was taken out of the quarterback's hands. Mike Flaherty came from the Michigan bench, touched Dick on the shoulder.

"You're out," Flaherty said. "Tough going, Dick."

Dick sat miserably on the bench. Nobody had said a

word to him, but he imagined that his teammates and his coaches were mentally berating him. He watched Michigan go right back to the power drives. Mike Flaherty carried four straight times, and it was a first down inside the ten. Ohio slowed up three smashes. Fourth down and goal to go three great big yards.

Michigan hustled from the huddle. The snapback went to Mike. He drove forward. The Ohio defense converged to stop a fourth line smash. Just before he hit the line, Mike Flaherty half-pivoted and tossed a lateral wide to Earl Crowe, and Crowe went over the double chalkmark of the goal line standing up.

Michigan was out in front, 16-14. A few seconds later Justin booted the conversion, and it was 17-14. It was still 17-14 at the final gun as Michigan staved off desperate Ohio passes for the remaining ninety seconds.

"Roses, I smell roses! . . . Um-m-m, and how! Smells great, huh! Oh you Steve. 'Member what you said about the Rose Bowl? . . . Cal-i-for-nia, here we come! . . ."

The Michigan dressing room was complete chaos.

". . . Rose Bowl . . . Yeah, it'll probably be Southern Cal. They're playing U.C.L.A. today, just about starting now. . . . Who cares whether it's Southern California or the whole Coast Conference? Man, we're going to the Rose Bowl! . . . Hey, Steve, how about some dope for the column? . . . Rose Bowl . . . Rose Bowl . . ."

Newspapermen, alumni, everyone who could crowd past the guards at the doors, milled around in the Michigan dressing room. The imaginary smell of roses dominated the joyous place.

In a corner in front of his locker Dick Thornley wearily

pulled off his sweat-soggy equipment. He was desperately unhappy. No thought of the coming Rose Bowl trip occupied his mind. There was not room. A hammering refrain crowded everything else out of his mind.

You'll never change! When the chips are down, you revert to type! . . . You'll never change! When the chips are down, you revert to type! . . . You'll never change . . . never change . . . never change. . . .

XXVI

A Little Acid!

“**F**ORGET FOOTBALL. Break training—but gently. Relax for a couple of weeks.”

Those were the instructions that Steve Foster and his staff gave the squad after the Ohio game. But they couldn't forget football. Steve and the other coaches knew that, when they took off to scout Southern California in the Trojan-Notre Dame game the week after the Western Conference season closed. Everyone was eager to talk about the coming Rose Bowl game. But Dick told himself that it was good to lounge around the Union lobby or the house or some other fellow's room.

Football practice had never seemed like drudgery, but he was glad to be relieved from the routine of Ferry Field or the movie room or the chaltalks. And there was never a dull moment around the house. Specs Cook's fertile brain was ably abetted by Pudge Friedberg's or Goldman's or Red's. Anyone, including the three most frequent gagsters, was likely to be the victim.

The most recent one happened the day that Steve had set for resumption of football practice. Dick was making a final check of his quantitative analysis notes in preparation for an examination when Specs came into the room.

"Can you take a minute from boning for that chemistry blue book?" Specs asked. "Pudge has a problem. He won't accept advice from any of the rest of us. Can you imagine, he doesn't trust us! He was leary about interrupting your mental labors, so I'm here to carry back your directions."

"What's the problem?" Dick asked warily. "I haven't time for a gag, Specs."

"Sure, sure, I know. But it'll only take a minute, and it's right down your alley."

Specs shoved his glasses on his nose. Nobody would have suspected from his serious mien that anything off-trail was brewing in his mind.

"Pudge has collected a lot of little stones," Specs said. "Nothing of any value, just common stones of unusual shapes or coloring. His girl goes for that sort of thing. He's made a neat little box to mail them in, and he wants to engrave the words 'Common jewels for an uncommon Jewel' on a brass plate on the lid. Ain't that a sweet sentiment? You never know what a guy will do when he gets tangled with the fair sex. Anyway, Pudge wants to know, can you tell him how to do the engraving?"

Dick regarded his roommate suspiciously. But Specs did not even smile.

"Why, probably the easiest way would be for him to spread a thin coating of paraffin over the brass," Dick said. "Then take a knife blade or anything pointed and letter what he wants through the paraffin to the brass and pour a little nitric acid in the lettering. The acid will burn into the brass, and there's the engraving."

"Nitric acid, paraffin over the brass, letter it, and pour in a little acid." Specs repeated Dick's directions. "Pudge

will probably invite you to the wedding—when and if,” he added.

Dick went back to his studying. Half an hour passed. He was just about to take off for Ferry Field and football practice when Red came bursting into the room. Red was choking and sputtering and tears rolled down his cheeks.

“My Judas!” Red coughed. “What’s coming off? Come out here and see!”

A pungent acridness had followed Red through the door. Dick’s nose and throat smarted as the boys dashed into the hall. The second-floor hallway was filled with a brown gas. It was rolling down the stairs in a brown cloud. Dick knew in a moment what had happened.

“That doggone Specs,” he muttered. He leaped up the stairs.

From beneath the door of Pudge Friedberg’s room a brown cloud mushroomed. Dick threw open the door. Pudge stood staring at a small box on his table. Brown smoke fumed from the brass plate on the box lid. Pudge was alternately coughing and wiping the back of his hand over his cheeks. They were smudged and wet.

“Holy Toledo!” Pudge gasped. “I followed the directions you gave to Specs, Dick, and look!”

Dick looked. His brown eyes sparkled. He said, “I suppose Specs had to go somewhere just when you were about to do the engraving.”

“Yeah. He hurried away right after he brought me the bottle of acid.”

“Just what directions did Specs give you?”

“Why, to coat the brass with paraffin, scratch the letters, and pour plenty of nitric acid into . . .”

“Plenty of acid! Sure—then he beat it! There’s nothing

to worry about, Pudge. It'll take a little time, but the vapor will disappear. Trouble is, you should have used only a very *little* acid. I told Specs that. You dumped on the whole bottle, and you've got the whole house filled with nitric oxide."

Dick chuckled all the way to the fieldhouse. It was about the only chuckling he did for two weeks. Steve Foster and his staff put him to work again. It was almost like the beginning of the season.

"As you know—I hope," Steve started out, "there are eighteen basic plays in our system. Ohio's defense gave us some trouble until you fellows realized that our blocking assignments are carried out in a definite pattern regardless of the type of defense. We are going to stick with those eighteen basic formations. We will run a lot of variations from them, but the blocking assignments remain the same.

"Now, here's a thing I want you all to remember, especially Pete Byrne: Michigan does not use the off-tackle as its basic offensive weapon. Off-tackle is where you meet the toughest, roughest gorilla the opposition can provide. We know from watching Southern California that such is the case with them. Our basic attack against them is going to go right over the middle five men. All right, let's go."

They went that day. They went for days to come. Snow and cold drove them from the practice field into spacious Yost fieldhouse, and the coaches gave them work inside. Steve Foster walked around, slouching, but seeing everything. He always talked in a quiet tone; his statements were always positive and full of meat.

"You find a wide tackle, you will cut through here—

inside—and block that defensive back. The tackle is out of the play anyway. . . . If you find the backer-up checked, just slide off him and go on to cut down somebody else. . . . What do you do on 53, Gross? . . . Well, did you do it? . . . Punts are not blocked right on top of the kicker. You make your leap back here, when you're through the hole. . . . Jump! Make the headlines. Block a kick and be a hero! . . .”

Heavy Carr prowled around, stocky and thick-necked, missing little.

“You’ve gotta be a puncher. . . . You gotta *charge!* Get the angle on the other guy and hit him. . . . My Criminey, R. E. you’ve gotta block with authority! . . .”

Jerry Etteboon checked on the ends.

“Right end, there—Etten. Your target is the center line backer. Get him! . . . You’re not on a vacation because the play goes to the other side, Manner! Block somebody. *Anybody* in a wrong-colored jersey. . . .”

“Oh, spizzola! Slant, *slant*, SLANT! . . .” Labbie Labadie screeched all over the place. “Don’t give a tackler a full target. . . .”

“Confound it, you’re college men. You’re supposed to have brains. . . . Use them! . . . The man with the angle is the lead blocker; the man in front is the post blocker. . . . Watch it.”

Michigan’s coaching staff cracked their whips relentlessly. Michigan was going to be ready for Southern California if the coaches had their way. And every day Labbie drilled Dick in spinning and ball-handling technique.

Dick never made complaint over the extra work, but he thought bitterly to himself that Labadie was wasting effort. Steve Foster would never trust him in at the full-

back post on offense again. Labadie sensed how low the boy's spirits were.

"Get it out of your nut that Steve is holding that fumble against you," the backfield coach said. "Or anybody else. You were magnificent on that drive in Columbus. You played as big a part as anyone in our win. Just could be that you'll play as big a part in the Rose Bowl game."

But Dick was not cheered. He was experiencing the old doubts and misgivings, multiplied many times.

XXVII

Pasadena Bound

MICHIGAN SQUAD OFF FOR CALIFORNIA

Ann Arbor—(*Special*) Forty-four strong, Michigan's Rose Bowl Caravan rolled out of Ann Arbor today, via special train headed for the Golden West and a New Year's Day showdown with the Trojans of Southern California.

One hundred thirteen bandmen, alumni, faculty representatives, and a corps of sports writers followed the squad aboard. No official demonstration was planned, but several thousand students gathered at the depot and gave the Western Conference champions a rousing send-off. . . .

The unbeaten and untied Wolverines are due to arrive in Pasadena Saturday morning. They will begin a ten-day workout period immediately at Brookside park, a short five-minute trip from the Huntington Hotel where they will be quartered. . . .

. . . Quoting Ben Benson: "They're in good physical shape. The layoff after the Ohio game did them a world of good. A team is naturally under a lot of tension during an undefeated season. I figure the relaxation did them more good than the time spent in practice would have done. . . ."

DICK FINISHED reading Flash Flager's daily stint. He leaned back in his comfortable seat in the Pullman. Flager

would see to it that each member of the squad was provided with a copy of his paper's sportsheet every day. It was good to read about things in your usual paper even if it was a day late. It gave you a feeling of being not so far away from home. Dick looked idly out the window. Where were they now? Through Texas and into New Mexico? Gosh, this was a big country. It seemed like a week since they had left Ann Arbor, and yet in another sense only a few hours.

R. E. came in and sat down beside Dick. "We're coming into Albuquerque pretty soon," R. E. said. "I'm going to buy something there to send back to my girl. Back to my girl, I say. C'mon and help me, Dick."

There was a short layover at Albuquerque, time for the travelers to stretch their legs. There were also newspapermen and press photographers as well as numerous peddlers of souvenirs. R. E. hurriedly ducked the newspapermen, dragged Dick with him toward a peddler clothed in what purported to be native Navajo Indian dress.

"He's for me," R. E. said. "He's got some mighty good-looking stuff. Mighty good-looking, I say."

"And he has the appearance of a poor, ignorant Indian," Dick said dryly. "Watch your step, R. E. He's probably a graduate of the Harvard School of Business."

The Indian had a quantity of bracelets. But like most "tourist bait," the pieces carried rather fancy price tags. R. E. pawed over the lot, picked out a hammered silver circlet that was simple in design but very handsome.

"How much?" R. E. asked.

"Twenty-five dollars. A bargain. Worth twice that in white man's shop."

"We can dispense with the ignorant-redskin-white-man

routine. Dispense with it, I say. I'll give you five dollars."

Dick looked on in amazement as the big center haggled with the Indian. His respect for R. E.'s bargaining powers increased as the haggling went on. But finally an impasse was reached, with R. E. stubbornly sticking to the ten-dollar offer he had reached by degrees and the Indian insisting that fifteen dollars was as low as he could go. He would be losing money at that figure, he wailed.

"Look," R. E. said. "It's about time for the train to shove off. Tell you what I'll do." He took a coin from his pocket. "I'll flip this half-buck and if it comes down heads, you sell me the bracelet for twelve-fifty. Tails, I give you fifteen. Is it a deal?"

The Indian hesitated, looked at the coin. Then suddenly he nodded his head. "It's a deal," he said.

R. E. shook the coin in his cupped hands, then spun it into the air. It came down heads. R. E. counted out twelve dollars and a half and put the bracelet in his pocket.

Dick said, "You're a regular Trader Horn."

R. E. chuckled, showed Dick the coin. Dick thought afterward that he should have been warned right then. The coin had heads on both sides.

"Guess I inherited some tricks from my great-grandmammy," he said. "She founded the family fortunes outsmarting Indians 'way back when she and great-grandpappy migrated to Injun Territory, and a redskin tomahawked grandpappy. Truth to tell, guess great-grandmammy come back to Virginia 'cause the Injuns got so they questioned her trading magic.

"Not that I outsmarted that Indian gent too much. Did you see him eyeing the half dollar? He knew it was a phony,

but he could sell the bracelet and still save face. Don't tell the fellows, huh, Dick? Don't tell 'em, I say. I'd rather they didn't . . ."

R. E. broke off, ducked suddenly behind Dick as a flash bulb exploded. A newspaper photographer had his camera aimed at Dick and R. E. He beat a hasty retreat as R. E. howled and started toward him. Dick grabbed the varsity center.

"You haven't time to chase him," Dick said. "The train's ready to take off."

They climbed aboard just as the conductor was moving the little podium from beneath the coach steps. On the platform of the Pullman, Dick faced R. E.

"All year you've been ducking publicity as though it were poison," Dick said. "I'll give you that you're sincere and not just playing hard to get, but why? You wise me up—or I'll wise up the gang on how you beat down that poor Indian worse than your great-grandmammy ever did!"

"That's it. That's it, I say!" R. E. groaned. "Great-grandmammy! She's a holy terror. She hates newspapers ever since some big city reporter interviewed her and wrote a humorous article on her life. And she holds a very dim view of athletics, too. Very dim, I say."

R. E. shuddered.

"I hate to think what would happen if she saw a picture of me in a newspaper, or anything that would let her know I'm playing football. Man, I can see the telegram I'd get!"

You stupid hillbilly, come right home! You will spend no more of my money to waste your time playing football! no wonder your marks are so low!"

R. E. shuddered again.

"That's a rough approximation. Rough, I say. The telegram she'd send would probably have to be on asbestos." R. E. looked mournful. "I flunked a math course in high school the one year that I played football, and great-grand-mammy put her foot down."

Dick chuckled, then stopped abruptly. It really was nothing to laugh at. He understood clearly that R. E.'s shunning of publicity had a solid basis.

The reception of the bracelet by teammates of R. E. was mixed. Some professed to believe that he had been cheated, but almost everyone admired the trinket. Barry Shane opined that he would be proud to send one like it to his girl—if he had a girl.

Dick was never sure how the talk got around to it—probably it was subtly steered in that direction by R. E.—but before long the varsity center was in the middle of a group that was trying to buy the bracelet from him.

"Look," R. E. finally said. "I can't sell it to one of you without making somebody else sore. Tell you what I'll do. I'll raffle it off. Two-bits a ticket—if everybody takes a chance. That's fair enough, huh? Fair enough, I say."

The would-be purchasers agreed. Somebody produced paper, and numbers from one to fifty were written on small strips, which were then folded so that the number could not be seen. R. E. and his aides canvassed the party. Forty-four players were badgered into exchanging a quarter for a chance. The four coaches, Ben Benson, Del Gregon—no one escaped. R. E. borrowed Steve Foster's hat, gathered the little folds of paper, dumped them into the hat, and shook them up thoroughly. He persuaded Steve to hold the improvised lottery bowl.

"I oughta have the privilege of pulling the winning number from the hat," R. E. said. "Long as it's my bracelet, and I'm letting it go for what I paid for it without making a nickel."

"Oh, no you don't! . . . We want a neutral to pull out the winner. . . . There aren't any neutrals, we've all got a chance. . . . Well, I don't know about that R. E. These southern gentlemen ain't always what they seem! . . . Aw, nuts, he can't be crooked with Steve holding the hat. Go on and draw, R. E."

Steve held his hat high so there was no possibility of R. E. seeing which slip of paper he was taking out. R. E. made a show of giving the raffle slips a thorough stirring. Then he pulled a bit of paper from the hat. He unfolded it. His eyes grew wide.

"Why, dog my buttons, it's little old number 50! My number! It was a good hunch to buy the chance with my football number on it. A good hunch, I say!"

R. E. took the bracelet from Heavy Carr, who had been holding it. Heavy looked at the center and the line coach's eyes twinkled.

"Thanks," R. E. said. Then he burlesqued his southern accent. "Thanks, fellows, thanks a lot. It's mighty nice of you-all to reimburse me for my girl's bracelet!"

For a second or two nobody moved. Then a corner of Steve Foster's mouth twitched. Steve and Heavy realized it first. Suddenly there was a concerted rush for R. E.

"Why, you gypper! . . . You snuck your slip under the hatband! . . . Let me get hold of that guy, I'll pry my two-bits back."

Big Mike Flaherty was in the vanguard of the rush for R. E. Mike tried to grab him. Whether the accident was

due to a sudden lurching of the train in rounding a curve, or to R. E.'s ducking ability, nobody could say. In any case, Mike Flaherty half-stumbled, lurched, sprawled over the arm of a seat and fell awkwardly to the floor. He did not get up. He sat there holding his shoulder, and sweat popped out on his brow.

Ben Benson was instantly kneeling beside Mike, probing gently. Ben looked up at Steve and shook his head.

"Looks like that was a pretty costly deal," Ben said. "I can't be certain, but my verdict right now is that this boy won't be playing any more football this year."

R. E. Lee was stunned. Tears stood in his eyes. He was blaming himself for what had happened. Gloom descended on the squad like a wet blanket.

Somebody muttered, "What a break! Where are we going to be without Mike!"

"That will be all of that!" Steve Foster's usually quiet tone snapped and crackled. "There will be no defeatism. In the first place, Mike may be all right. More than that, even if this had not happened, Mike might not have been our starting offensive fullback. Are you all forgetting the performance Dick Thornley turned in against Ohio? Mike himself suggested to me after that game that Dick had earned first call on the fullback job."

Steve's piercing eyes swept over the squad.

"Nobody except those present is to know about this. Understand? *Nobody*. Southern California just might get an upsetting surprise package when we turn Dick loose on them!"

Dick said to himself, that was all very fine. It was great to have Steve go to bat for you. But he could not forget the now-we're-sunk expressions that his teammates had worn.

A new emotion—slow rage, resentment, irritation—began to burn inside Dick Thornley. He kept seeing disappointed faces of his teammates. Doggone it, a guy can take about so much and then something has to give.

XXVIII

George Tirebiter—and a Little Old Lady

IT WAS A bigger than average hotel room, but it was close quarters in which to simulate a gridiron setup.

"That's it, that's the way, Dick," Labbie Labadie said. "Now do it again and spin the other way. Spizzola, you're better every time!"

Dick backed against the wall. The bed had been pushed to one side and a chair placed about five feet from the bed. Labbie crouched in the position a line backer might take about four yards from the opening between the bed and the chair. The bed and the chair represented two men on the line of scrimmage. Labbie was a defensive line backer.

"Now!" Labbie shouted.

Dick drove through the hole between the chair and the bed. He lowered his shoulders, made contact with his forearm, and spun off to the left until he smacked against the wall.

"Swell, swell," Labbie said. "Spizzola, you're a *good* spinner, Dick! We'll call that enough for now. Keep handling that football, though."

Dick nodded. At first he had been a little self-conscious, carrying a football, handling it, pivoting, and making believe, giving a handoff to someone. Now, after days of it,

he automatically picked up a football in his room, or anywhere. Several times he had started out for the dining room with the pigskin in his hand.

Well, doggone it, he mused, he'd sleep with a football if it would help.

Dick was walking along toward the room that he and R. E. shared when the big center popped through the door.

"There you are," R. E. said. "I mighta known you'd be in Labbie's room. Look, Steve said we could take one of the cars and a bunch of us go out and give the Rose Bowl the double-o—if we get back in time for the Christmas party. You wanta go?"

"Sure."

"Well, leave that doggone football in the room. I'm getting sick of the sight of a football, watching you lug it around everywhere."

Dick tossed the football into their room. They were joined in the hotel lobby by Barry Shane, Kolo, Earl Crowe, and Pete Byrne. One of the drivers of the smart-looking station wagons that had been provided for the use of the squad was with the trio.

"Boy," Kolo said as he stood looking in admiration at the automobile outside. "If the guys back in Gary could see me now! I claim those paint jobs are really something."

"You said it. I heard that some alumnus provided them as an advertisement for his agency out here. He decided to have six station wagons cart us back and forth from workouts to the hotel, and he had Steve ship him special paint from Ann Arbor so it would be sure to be just the right maize and blue."

"Well, it's for sure that everybody who sees them knows

they're Michigan. The lower half in blue and the upper in maize and that big maize block M against the blue. Man, these wagons are something!"

"How about the white convertible for Steve's personal use?"

They piled into the car. Somebody remarked that they ought to have a guide. Pete Byrne said, "I can give you all the dope."

"Oh, you've played in the Rose Bowl before?"

"Of course not." Pete Byrne grinned at Shane. "I might repeat a comment that was made in answer to a similiar crack from you when we were on the Coast for the California game: 'I just browsed through a couple of books.' 'Course, a big dumb tackle wouldn't . . ."

The quarterback broke off, looked quickly at Dick. He mumbled something that sounded like, "'Scuse, Dick." Dick was remembering that day and Jensen, and he knew he flushed.

Shane rumbled Pete Byrne's hair. "Okay, you animated encyclopedia," he said. "But you'd better know your stuff!"

Dick appreciated Shane's tactful effort, but the whole thing somehow added fuel to the fire that burned inside him.

They came to the huge bowl of steel and concrete in the Arroyo Seco. They were properly appreciative of the beautiful setting of the Rose Bowl, the spaciousness of the surrounding area. The car was parked outside the high-woven wire fence, and the boys went through the gates.

"Rose Bowl Hall of Fame." Pete Byrne read the lettering across the projection above the door of a white-stucco, modern little building at the top of the flight of concrete

steps. "There's a place we don't want to miss," Pete said. "But let's have a look-see at the Stadium proper first."

They went through a gate. The vast, empty expanse of the great Bowl stretched before them. It was huge. A short, stocky man with sandy hair saw them. He asked them if they were looking for someone.

"We're just getting a sort of preview," Kolo said. "We're Michigan players and . . ."

"Michigan players!" the stocky man cut in. "I'm the superintendent of the Bowl. Let me show you around."

The stocky gentleman pointed out the spacious pressbox on the west side. The boys looked at the huge scoreboard on the north rim of the Stadium. There was a duplicate on the south rim.

"It's a little different from ours," Pete Byrne said. "See, they've got a space at the left of the clock for the name of one team and one for the other on the right. Then below it are spaces to register the number of first downs each team has made. I like that. Besides, they show what down it is, which team has the ball, what yard line the ball is on, and the quarter. You have to admit that it's a more complete scoreboard than the ones in Michigan Stadium."

"Traitor, huh! This big West is getting him, fellows!"

They went into the dressing rooms of the visitors. The superintendent explained that they were almost identical for each team. The visitors usually had the dressing room quarters off the west drive. It was really a double dressing room, spacious and well appointed. There were twelve showers. A table for the trainer was of the latest adjustable type. A screen blackboard was for the use of the coaches in diagraming plays. There were electric heaters to ward off any chill, but the superintendent hastily ex-

plained that the heaters were rarely needed. He was a Californian all right!

"Gosh," Earl Crowe said. "Pretty expensive proposition to keep a place like this going for just one game a year."

The superintendent smiled. "Most people think that, but the Bowl is not just a one-day proposition. Last season we had forty-seven football games here. Los Angeles high schools, Pasadena Junior College, California Tech, Glendale High—we have plenty of games. It's used in the off season, too, for various purposes."

They went through the officials' dressing room. Here were eight lockers and private showers and an electric heater. The Rose Bowl facilities were all right, they decided. After declining the superintendent's offer to conduct them to the pressbox, they climbed a flight of stairs to the Rose Bowl Hall of Fame.

Outside the door, a typical, ugly-mugged bulldog sat on his haunches. Pete Byrne stopped the crowd.

"George Tirebiter!" he cried. "Careful, guys!"

"George Tirebiter? Are you nuts?" Barry Shane eyed the quarterback. "Who the heck is George Tirebiter?"

"He's just about the biggest figure on the Southern Cal campus, that's all. Golly, you're ignorant! Didn't you ever hear of S.C.'s famous mascot? Why, once somebody spirited George Tirebiter away, and the whole campus was in mourning. Southern Cal men accused U.C.L.A. guys of stealing the pooch, and blood was shed every time an S.C. man encountered a U.C.L.A. stude. George Tirebiter came back with U.C.L.A. clipped in his hair, but U.C.L.A. disclaimed any knowledge of his disappearance."

The boys looked doubtfully at Pete Byrne. Pete kept

a straight face. Dick said, "What's he doing out here?"

"Why, guarding the Hall of Fame, no doubt. Southern Cal has been the West Coast representative so many times in the Rose Bowl that the pooch probably feels a proprietary interest. He is . . ."

A man came from the door of the Hall of Fame, whistled at the dog, said, "Come on, Spanky." The bulldog trotted off at his heels.

"George Tirebiter!" Barry Shane spat disgustedly. "And you sucked us in that you were the guy who read the book! Nuts! I'm not taking anything else you say at face value."

But no words were needed, from Pete Byrne or anyone else, once they were inside the Hall of Fame. Pennants of schools that had competed in previous Rose Bowl games hung from the walls. On one end wall the words "Pasadena Tournament of Roses Football Hall of Fame" were lettered. Below the lettering were glass cases containing pictures of the competing teams of that particular New Year's Day, pictures of the coaches, little cardboard figures of players. There was a list of the scores of all the games played. There were charts of the progress of the ball in each game. But the thing that interested the boys most was a Michigan case in one corner.

On the bottom of the glass-enclosed case was an ancient Michigan *Ensian*, a 1902 yearbook. There was a 1924 U of M *Athletic Review*. There was a Commemorative Program of the 1902 game between Michigan and Stanford; a picture of Fielding H. Yost's mighty Point-a-Minute aggregation of that year; also a picture of Michigan's first football squad of 1897. They were wearing funny-looking canvas

jackets and pants and little caps that looked like berets. There was an odd little hat of blue felt with a faded maize *M* on the front.

They could have spent hours in that fascinating place, but R. E. reminded them that they had better get back to the hotel so they would be ready to attend the Christmas Party.

Dick was ready long before the party was to begin. He absently picked up the football and began twirling it, spinning, faking handoffs. R. E. rebuked him, "If you don't get out of here with that thing I'm gonna challenge you to a duel!"

Dick wandered out, still carrying the football. He kept handling it. He walked through a patio that seemed deserted. He practiced spinning and faking and hiding the ball. Suddenly a little old lady popped her head above the back of a chair that was half-hidden behind a potted palm.

"Young man," she said, "might I ask just what is wrong with you?"

Dick blushed. He eyed the wrinkled, white-haired little woman. She looked very old yet somehow ageless. He tried to explain. Before he knew it, she had skillfully drawn the whole story from him.

"Hm-m-m," she said. "Young man, you're a fool! Any adult male who has an ounce of get-up-and-go should be able to take care of himself. Get mad! Thumb your nose—well, I guess that isn't very ladylike of me to say. But show the other fellow that you are just as good as any one of them. You know a big hulk on your team name of R. E. Lee?"

Dick stared. It couldn't be—but he was sure before the little old lady spoke again that it was.

"He's my great-grandson," she said. "The silly young'un! Saw a picture of him 'tother day in a paper. Took one of these airplanes and come out here. Silly! He thinks I haven't known all along that he's playin' this football. Don't you tell him I'm out here, young man—but see to it that you boys beat these California braggers!

"Oh, I guess there's nothing really wrong with 'em, wouldn't care much for people that didn't stick up for their own country. But they always have the biggest and the best and the most of anything, 'cording to their tell. You boys lick 'em, you hear? We don't have to concede anything in *anything* to California. You mind what I told you, give 'em their come-uppance, you hear?"

Dick took his departure. R. E.'s great-grandmammy was quite a person. Somehow he felt a big lift as he went back to his room and deposited the football before he headed for the party.

The Christmas party was given by the hotel management. The spacious ballroom was decorated with a huge Christmas tree and lights and appropriate tinsel and bright ornaments. The whole squad was there and many alumni. There was a Santa Claus. But before Santa's visit, the assistant manager of the hotel made a little speech to the Michigan squad.

". . . traditional that the visiting teams stay at the Huntington . . . We have seen them all . . . honestly and sincerely say that you boys from Michigan are the most gentlemanly, courteous, and all-around fine guests that the Huntington has had the privilege of entertaining

. . . folks of Michigan, your university, your coaches can be proud of you . . . from the workouts, we judge that your gentlemanliness ceases once you are in football uniforms. . . .”

The hotel man droned on. It was pleasant to hear and to know that it was true. You had better be a gentleman on Steve Foster’s squad!

Then came Santa. Every member of the Michigan squad, as well as the children of the alumni, received gifts from the hotel. There were some joke gifts, too. Dick unwrapped an odd-shaped package given him and found inside a pee-wee-sized football. On the card was written: “You can carry this one to bed with you without danger of it rolling you out.”

Dick did not object to the laughter that came with the gift. He was pleased. But come New Year’s Day, perhaps his football handling might pay off. It certainly was going to pay off if determination had anything to do with it.

XXIX

Rose Bowl Game

“**N**ow, cubs, everybody’ll be better off if you keep calm. This is just another little old football game. Take it cool, that’s all. Take it cool, I say. Get into your clothes, ready to go, like me and stay calm.”

R. E. strode about the dressing room. As usual, he could not stand still. Dick looked at him and wondered how much more excited R. E. would be if he knew that his great-grandmammy was here to watch him play. Suddenly Dick’s eyes widened. And R. E. was telling everybody to be calm! Barry Shane looked up from tightening the lace of a shoe.

“Maybe you’d better put on your pants before you’re *quite* ready to go,” Shane said to R. E. “Calm! Oh, brother!” The whole team roared at his words.

Steve Foster was moving restlessly about the room. Dick suddenly noticed a peculiar thing. Someone had given Steve a few packages of gum, and every little while Steve peeled a stick and jammed it into his mouth. He must have had five or six sticks in that wad, and his jaws were moving rapidly.

Steve Foster was never known to chew gum!

It was a queer thing about this Rose Bowl game. Tension

was showing in strange places and in strange ways. Dick felt empty and all-gone inside. Even the butterflies had not yet started to flutter. Without realizing it he was pulling a telegram from his pocket and rereading it:

PULLING FOR YOU, DICK. OLD DOC COOK KNOWS YOU WILL
COME THROUGH A HUNDRED PERCENT. GET MAD, ROOMIE.
LUCK.

SPECS COOK

Good old Specs. He had wanted so very much to come out for the game. But when he had arrived home for Christmas vacation, he had found his father in poor health. He had written Dick that he had not mentioned to his family his plan to hitch-hike to Pasadena. It was funny that Specs should have given him the same advice that R. E.'s great-grandmammy had offered.

Get mad, eh? Maybe that was right. He had been getting mad, or something, ever since the day that Mike fell and hurt his bad shoulder.

There had been a further kickback on Mike's injury. The news had leaked out in spite of Steve's warning.

Coast sports writers had succeeded in showing by devious comparisons of scores of games that Southern California rated favorite over Michigan. Notre Dame had beaten Illinois by two touchdowns; Michigan took Illinois by only two points, thus making Notre Dame twelve points better than Michigan—on paper. Then Southern California and Notre Dame had tied at three touchdowns each, a fact that made Southern California equal to Notre Dame and therefore a twelve-point favorite over Michigan.

The same coast writers took the rumor of Mike Flaherty's

injury with the proverbial grain of salt, but stated that if it was not a bear story from the Michigan camp, the odds for a Southern California victory were enhanced fifty per cent.

It made Dick angry just to think of the stories being written about them. Okay, so it could be that some sports writers were going to get a shock along with some Southern Cal guys. Oh, heck, quit whistling in the dark, Thornley. You know doggone well you're worried stiff yourself.

He was finally dressed and out on the field loosening up. The huge Bowl was filling rapidly. The Rose Bowl game is always a sellout months in advance. It draws ninety-five thousand football fans.

Time seemed to have come to a standstill. But still Dick fumed. What's the matter with you? Doggone it, you're awed. Snap out of it. These Southern Cal guys pull their pants on the same way you do. Coast teams haven't been so hot against Western Conference competition. Yeah, but this is the Rose Bowl game.

Then suddenly he was back in the dressing room. Steve Foster had finally disposed of his wad of gum. All the coaches were prowling around restlessly. No oratory from Steve. Just, "Here it is, men. We've done all we can with you; you'll have to take it from here. All right, everybody out."

Kolo won the toss. We're receiving. Doggone it, come to life, Thornley! You're in a daze. You're starting this ballgame. The team is going to go about as you go. Snap out of it.

The whistle.

A line of Southern California men swept downfield from the forty. It was a high kick. Earl Crowe called for the

ball. He got it. Dick threw a block at a Cardinal jersey, and the Southern Cal tackler went down. But he didn't experience that usual relaxing of tension. Earl carried to the twenty-six before a swarm of tacklers smothered him.

"Okay, we roll," Pete Byrne said in the huddle. "It's 53. Do your stuff, Jensen. Break."

That 53 was the wingback reverse. The line shifted strong to the right. R. E. snapped the ball to Dick, and he drove forward two strides, faked a handoff to Pete Byrne, swung in back of the quarterback as though slanting off the strong side tackle. One, two, three. Dick placed the ball on his hip, point out as Labadie had taught. Bart Jensen flashed by. He grabbed at the ball. But something happened. Dick felt it as he completed his spin and fake. He whirled and saw the brown leather bounding crazily on the turf.

"Ball! . . . ball!" Dick dove. But he landed on a cardinal-colored jersey. Southern Cal recovered the fumble on the Michigan twenty-two-yard line.

"Well, well, thank you, Thornley!" The Southern California man grinned. "They told us you didn't have it. This is going to be easy with you in here!"

That was the start. Dick was in on the tackle that smeared the Trojan ball carrier on their first play. Barely a yard gain. But a Southern Cal man threw another barb: "Lucky, Thornley. You won't do it again. We've got your number. . . ."

The rage that had been burning slowly in Dick for days began to smolder. He was angry at himself. He thought he saw teammates throwing covertly worried glances at him, and he was suddenly angry at them, too.

He ripped and smashed on the next play and was lucky that his blind stab happened to be right. He crashed the ball carrier behind the line of scrimmage for a two-yard loss.

"Going to be easy, huh! . . . Haven't got it, huh! . . . C'mon, you false-alarm Trojans! . . ."

Dick took savage joy in tossing the barbs back. Southern California men gave him odd looks. They tried a pass. Dick stuck with his man like a mustard plaster. The pass was to that man. Jump . . . doggone! Should have hung onto that apple. Fourth down and eleven to go. They won't try a line play. Maybe another pass. That-a-boy, R. E.! The way to go. Our ball. Now give me that thing, Pete.

But a hand touched Dick's shoulder before he got into the huddle. "I'm in for you, Dick," he heard. He stared stupidly. Steve had sent in a replacement for him who had seen barely ten minutes of play all season!

He trotted to the bench, and he was suddenly consumed with anger at Steve and Labadie and—and—Steve eyed him and Dick thought for a moment that the headcoach was about to say something but he didn't. Dick sunk to the bench and buried his head in his hands.

Back in Columbus, Theral Thornley leaned forward in his chair tensely and adjusted the radio. The voice from Pasadena came in a bit more clearly.

". . . Yessir, fans, that's right. I couldn't believe my spotter for a moment, but Thornley is out of the game. Coach Foster has sent in a green, untried replacement. . . . Southern Cal failed to capitalize on the first break of the game, and the recovered fumble did them no

good . . . the Wolverines take over possession of the ball. . . .”

“Oh, Theral, what happened! Dick isn’t hurt; why did Steve take him out?” Margaret Thornley sat up indignantly. “Dick didn’t fumble. It was Jensen who . . .”

“Take it easy, Peg, take it easy.” Dick’s father packed tobacco in his pipe. “Steve Foster isn’t the kind of coach to take a boy out because he made a mistake. We’ll have to wait and see.”

“. . . and this famed Michigan precision offense is sadly off . . . ,” the radio voice resumed. “Michigan can’t go anyplace. Crowe takes the ball on a handoff from Byrne. He’s driving inside guard on a cutback . . . he makes a yard . . . Michigan will have to punt. Crowe is back; he gets the ball away, and it is taken by—no, it goes out of bounds. . . .”

The radio voice droned on. A frown creased Theral Thornley’s brow as the minutes went past, and Dick was still not back in the game. He regretted bitterly that commitments for classes the day following New Year had forced him to miss attending the game.

“. . . A time out,” the announcer said. “We hesitate to make predictions, but the way this game has gone this first ten minutes, it will either end in a scoreless tie or one team or the other will win by a break. Southern California’s Trojans have been unable to get a sustained drive going; Michigan’s attack has failed completely. They have not registered a single first down while the men of Troy have made only one. . . .

“There, we’ve been waiting for this. The Southern California rooting section is putting on one of their famed card displays. There is the cheerleader’s signal, and cardi-

nal cards go up against a background of gold. Cardinal and Gold are Southern California colors, you know. They have formed the letters U.S.C. diagonally down from the upper left of the huge rectangle and spelled out "TROY" across the bottom . . . a very colorful display. . . . Now the Michigan band strikes up . . . marched at least twenty miles down Colorado Avenue in the big parade, so a member of the band told our field mike operator. But they certainly do not sound fagged out. We'll switch you to the field mike. . . ."

Dick Thornley sat on the end of the bench and glared unseeing across the field at the Southern California card display. His mind was a turmoil. A potpourri of events raced through his thoughts: your integration has been shaken . . . inferiority. . . . You sell yourself the idea that you're as good as any toad in the puddle . . . my little old turtle never doubted he was the best man. . . . Old Doc Cook says get mad, roomie. . . . Young man, you're a fool! Any adult male with an ounce of get-up-and-go can take care of himself. . . . So you had a bad afternoon, forget that Frosh game. . . . Forget Jensen . . . if you just *believe* you can handle the ball, you can do it. . . . Mike might not have been our offensive fullback. . . .

Words that Specs Cook and R. E.'s great-grandmammy had said were jumbled together with things that Barry Shane and Steve had said. What the heck am I—psycho-neurotic! Doggone it, a guy can't take it. . . . Well, then do something about it. . . . What? Well, sit here and mope and feel sorry for yourself. You're sore, huh! Okay, get out there and let those guys know it. Show your own

guys as well as Southern California. Labbie says you're a *good* ballhandler! Are you going to take this lying down? . . . Dick Thornley is the only guy who can lick it. . . .

Dick was suddenly down beside Steve Foster.

"Put me in there, Steve," Dick pleaded. "You've *got* to put me in there! I can lick this thing. I won't fumble. Honest. Send me in there and . . ."

"I didn't take you out because of the fumble," Steve Foster cut in quietly. "You're going back in. I intended to keep you out only for a play or two, to give you a chance to settle, to regain your poise. I was going to talk to you. The expression you had when you came out changed my mind.

"Listen, Dick: you are a good football player. You can be a *great* one. You were great for a few minutes against Ohio. Think back: didn't the Ohio men needle you?"

Dick stared at his coach for a moment. His brown eyes widened.

"Why—why, yes," he said. "Sure they did. They had a pretty fancy line."

"And you jammed it down their throats. The needling rolled off you like birdshot off an elephant hide. That's what you have to have, Dick—an elephant hide. Poise is important. You can't afford to lose it. Now, get out there. You're our fullback. I've been waiting for you to battle this business out of your system. A man sometimes has to whip himself. I'd stake a lot on the hunch that you have done it."

Dick raced out, touched the arm of the reserve in the fullback position. He glared around the huddle. He fixed a steady gaze on Bart Jensen.

"There are going to be some changes made," Dick said

fiercely. "There *have* been some changes made—and they're gonna stick! Get this, all of you. We're going to go! Steve said to give me that apple, Pete." Steve hadn't said that in so many words, but Dick was not quibbling right then. "We can lick these guys," Dick said. "We're gonna lick 'em! Changes are permanent, get that, Jensen!"

Bart Jensen's black eyes snapped. His chin jutted. His helmet was off, and he ran a hand through his stubby black hair and half scowled.

"I'm all for it," he said. "But show us!"

A gleam was in Barry Shane's eyes. Shane said, "He'll show us—and how! Let's go, Dick. The old Wolverine Express!"

Pete Byrne nodded. "26B," he said. "Through you, Kolo."

They trotted from the huddle, snapped into a single-wing formation strong to the left. A Southern California man eyed Dick and grinned wickedly. "Oh-hoh!" he jibed. "Easy meat is back again! Everybody grab the gravy train!"

R. E.'s snap from center was perfect. Dick snatched it, and for a second he did not grasp the ball firmly. His heart jumped into his throat and then a surge of rage flooded over him. He was almost mad for an instant. He squeezed that ball as though it represented all the frustration he had experienced. He faked the handoff to Bart Jensen. He completed his spin and there was a good hole between Kolo and Barry Shane—he hit it with all the power he had. The Southern Cal man who had taunted him with the words "easy meat" lunged at Dick, and Dick felt good when he planted the butt of his hand in the Southern Cal man's face and shoved him off with a stiff

arm. A line backer rushed at him. Dick hunched his shoulders and drove straight into him. The solid impact was reassuring. The referee blasted his whistle.

"Second and one," the official said.

The ball was on the Michigan twenty-seven.

"You've got a pocketful of horseshoes. Thornley! . . . Nothing to worry about, Thornley just got lucky! . . . We'll wash you outa here, Thornley—but quick! . . ."

Southern California needlers jabbed the barbs. Dick grinned at a brawny lineman.

"Coming through you this time, All American," he said. "See if you can live up to your press clippings!"

The Southern Cal man gave him a peculiar look. And Pete Byrne gave him a peculiar look in the huddle. "Gimme that apple through that hot-shot guard, Pete," Dick said. Pete Byrne nodded.

The quarterback faked the handoff to Earl Crowe, whirled and tossed the ball to Dick. Dick was driving slantwise. He faked a handoff to Bart Jensen as the wing-back sliced past. Dick spun and cut back into the guard spot. He high-kneed through the hole and again shoved a stiff arm to brush off grasping hands.

First down on the forty-five. Dick grinned a savage kind of grin at the Southern Cal man who was leading the needling. Poise, eh? Heck, Dick thought, I've got plenty of poise. How come I ever let that stuff bother me? Get mad, eh? Well—a cold rage filled him.

Another sashay into the line. Tacklers ganged up on him, but Dick kept driving, and when they rode him to the ground he laughed at them, because the referee had not blown his whistle. They had not caught his handoff to

Bart Jensen, and Jensen was wriggling through the secondary. He'd foxed them that time! So they were going to get him out of here quick, eh?

Michigan suddenly began to resemble the Michigan that had waded through a difficult Western Conference schedule. Pete Byrne had a new snap to his tone when he called the plays in the huddle. The team was chattering excitedly.

"We roll . . . the old fight . . . give that thing to Dick through my guy. He's been kinda shovin' me around . . . let's go all the way. . . ."

A spin-buck inside left guard. Second and one on the Southern Cal thirty-two. They were still throwing barbs at Dick, but the shafts no longer carried any sting. "Lucky, Thornley . . . you won't be in here long . . . Rabbit-ears. . . ."

Dick took a savage delight in slamming into those men hard. Once an odd thought flicked across his mind. He hoped R. E.'s great-grandmammy was pleased with the way they were giving Southern Cal their "come-uppance." There was a cutback into the center of the line, and it was first down on the twenty-six.

"Hold that line! Hold that line! Hold that line!"

They had Southern California supporters chanting frantically now. The Michigan band was waving caps in unison toward the Southern Cal goal and yelling exultantly, "Go! Go! Go!"

Pete Byrne called 26B again. Dick knew from the feel of things that the timing was right, the deception was right. He barreled through the hole into the secondary, and the line backers had been sucked in by the deception.

His cleats churned and dug into the turf. They slammed him out of bounds, but he was barely a yard from the red flag on the goal line.

"First down and goal to go," the referee said.

In the huddle, teammates slapped Dick on the back. "The way to go . . . sock it to 'em, Dick, sock it to 'em, I say! . . . Hah! Ram it down their gullets, fellow! . . ."

Pete Byrne said, "It's yours, Dick. Straight through the middle."

Dick said, "Nix. Give it to Earl or—" he eyed Jensen—"or Bart." He was thinking of the Ohio game. So evidently was Bart Jensen. Jensen said, "Hah! Not a chance. There've been some changes, remember? Lug that potato over, fellow!"

Dick lugged it over. No finesse. R. E. snapped the ball, dove at his man. Kolo and Shane double-teamed the burly Southern Cal guard. Dick hit the line and for an instant was stopped. Then the driving momentum of the concerted Michigan charge told. Dick suddenly catapulted into the end zone.

Touchdown!

A Rose Bowl touchdown! But Dick knew deep inside that it was more than that. He was abruptly overflowing with confidence. He winked at Bart Jensen. Jensen winked back. Dick did not know it, but a graying gentleman back in Columbus leaned back in his chair and grinned at a young-looking mother as he listened to the radio.

The radio voice was saying: ". . . and we've seen a lot of ball carriers. But this spark that Dick Thornley has provided, his churning, ripping, tearing power and his finesse in handling the ball, has turned a sluggish and impotent Michigan attack into a precision fury. . . . Bob Justin—

Automatic Jus—has just booted a perfect conversion, and the score is Michigan, 7; Southern California, 0 . . . we are forced to hedge our prediction earlier in the game. With Thornley spearheading that smooth Michigan offense, Michigan is liable to win as it pleases. . . .”

Justin's kickoff was low and bounding and nasty to handle. R. E. and Dick and Barry Shane bottled the receiver on the twenty-four. Now Southern California began. But they hardly got started. It was a slamming tackle by Dick Thornley that jarred the ball from the grasp of a Trojan back, and it was old ball-hawk R. E. Lee who recovered for Michigan on the Southern California thirty-two.

“We're cashing this break,” Pete Byrne stated. “Pour it on. 26B.”

The spinner worked like a coach's dream. Southern California was again sucked in by the deception. They smothered Bart Jensen while Dick rammed over guard. He rammed to a spot just inside the fifteen-yard stripe before they got him. There was no needling from the Southern Cal men now. Dick took great satisfaction in reminding them.

“Rabbit-ears are a dime a dozen,” he said to them. “You guys want to take on a couple of dozen!”

The Michigan precision attack rolled along on well-oiled bearings. Earl Crowe on a cutback into guard. Jensen for two yards on a delayed buck. First down on the five when the Michigan backfield executed a bit of ball-handling legerdemain that ended with a lateral to Earl Crowe as the man in motion. “Take it over, Dick. . . . We'll give you a hole. . . .”

Dick took it over and found it easy. Southern Cal never did tackle him as he went into the end zone. They had been completely fooled. Automatic Bob made it 14-0.

Another second-quarter touchdown five minutes before the half. Earl Crowe scored this one. Just to show Southern California that Michigan owned a diversified attack—and because the Trojans changed their defense to virtually an eight-man line to slow up the power game—Pete Byrne called three pass plays in that second long-sustained Michigan scoring march. All three aerals were good.

Not much happened in the dressing room between halves. Everybody was excited. Labbie bounced around like a rubber ball, swatted Dick on the shoulder fifteen times, or so it seemed to Dick. He knew that Mike Flaherty was sincere when he said, "You were a ball of fire, Dick. I knew you could do it. It looks as though it was a break for us when I gimped my shoulder—and that's no pun."

They trotted back for the second half. The Southern Cal offense was throttled early. They were throwing no caustic barbs now. Back to the offensive grind, but it wasn't a grind. It was fun.

Bill Manner took a long pass on the second play after the Southern California punt. The pass caught the Trojans completely off guard. Bill raced down the sideline for thirty-six yards after grabbing the ball, and it was Michigan, 20; Southern California, 0. An amazing thing happened—Automatic Jus missed the conversion try!

It was all Michigan now. Southern Cal did not quit. They were a good ballclub, soundly coached, and they fought. But they were playing against a Michigan team that was realizing its full potential.

It was good to see Bart Jensen score just after the beginning of the fourth quarter, good to see the little dance that he did after he scooted past the Southern Cal safety man into the end zone. It was something to see the expression on

Bob Justin's face, just about unbelieving, after he missed a second conversion try in succession.

Ten minutes of playing time remained on the scoreboard clock when Michigan went on the march again. Three first downs. Dick did not really feel sorry for the Southern California men, but he had a certain respectful admiration for them. They were battling just as hard as though they were still in the ballgame. Maybe Michigan lost a little edge off the sharpness of their attack. The drive sputtered a bit on the Southern California nineteen. Third down and five to go.

"Just for kicks," somebody said in the huddle, "let's get Steve to send Bob in to boot a field goal. Just for kicks, huh?"

A replacement came in for Hank Gross. Captain Kolo instructed Hank to ask Steve. Kolo called a timeout and in a few seconds Bob Justin trotted from the bench. Southern Cal did not know what to think.

They were afraid of charging too robustly. They thought that the placekick setup was a fake. It was no fake. Bob Justin lifted a perfect placekick over the bars, and the score was Michigan, 29; Southern California, 0.

Steve took Dick from the game. Dick slapped the third string man who replaced him on the seat of the pants. Then as he trotted to the Michigan bench, a thunderous and sustained roar beat down on him. He looked up, not believing, then suddenly realized that this great crowd was giving him an ovation. He felt warm and good inside, and he had to swallow a tightness in his throat.

Michigan, 29; Southern California, 0.

Dick knew as he joined his wildly jumping and jabbering teammates and raced for the dressing room at the final gun

that if Steve had not swept the Michigan bench of reserves clean, finished the game with almost every regular on the sideline, the scoreboard could easily have registered Michigan, 49; Southern California, 0. But Dick was willing to settle for the figures on the board.

Michigan, 29; Southern California, 0.

Rose Bowl Champions! The Michigan band strutted off the field. They were playing the *Victors*. . . . Hail, hail to Michigan, the champions of the west. . . .

XXX

Rose Bowl All-American

THE DRESSING ROOM was a madhouse. Whoops. Hollers. Shouts. Whistles. Men throwing their arms around other men in all stages of undress, thumping one another on the back until they felt more bruised than Southern California had made them feel.

Labbie Labadie charged around from man to man as if he were crazy. "Spizzola! You played a great game! . . . Wonderful. . . Perfect. . . Proud of you. . . Spizzola!"

Steve Foster smiled quietly, saying little. There was a tired relaxation on the longish face of the coach that Dick had never seen before.

"Hey, how did you like that block I threw on Manner's t.d. run, Heavy? . . . You were great. You were all great . . ." Heavy Carr stalked about, grinning happily. Jerry Etteboon jumped around with his hat crushed on the side of his head where some delirious alumnus had swatted him. Jerry shook hands with Bill Manner and Etten and the other end men.

Kolo and R. E. and Hank Gross and Pete Byrne suddenly rushed at Steve Foster.

"Under the shower . . . we let you off after the Ohio game, but not now . . . douse him. . . ."

They hustled the headcoach under a shower, fully dressed, and turned on the water. Steve stood there smiling. He signaled the equipment manager, and the manager dragged a suitcase from behind a big equipment trunk. The suitcase contained a complete change of clothing for Steve Foster.

"I sort of anticipated this," Steve said. He smiled quietly. "I had more confidence in you fellows than some of you had in yourselves."

It was a crazy, joyous madhouse.

Flash Flager came in. He had lost his hat somewhere in the crush getting down from the pressbox. His thin hair was mussed. His eyes were very bright. He carried a portable radio. Somebody asked him where he got it.

"Won it," Flash said proudly. "A foolish feller took issue with old Flager's prediction in the first quarter that we'd find ourselves and win by three touchdowns. Bet me this portable against a box of cigars. Chums, it's a good radio, too. Listen."

Flager fiddled with the dials, tuned out the squawks. A voice came from the radio.

". . . to Michigan's net of 283 yards by rushing. Michigan completed the only three passes that Earl Crowe tried. That about winds it up, fans, except to repeat that the score was Michigan, 29; Southern California, 0.

"But before going off the air, your announcer wants to get in his personal plug for Dick Thornley. Captain Kolo and Barry Shane were picked on practically every All-American selection at season close. Earl Crowe was mentioned on more than a few. No mention was made of Dick Thornley.

"This announcer wants to go on record that in his book—

and taking nothing from the deserved honors Kolo, Shane, and Crowe earned—that Dick Thornley was *the* All-American out here today. . . .”

Dick stood enthralled. He said to Flager, “Gosh, do you suppose my folks back in Columbus can hear that?”

“Sure. It’s on a national hookup, chum. They’re probably glued to their radio.”

The radio voice went on.

“. . . and in closing, we can’t help but repeat that Dick Thornley gave us one of the greatest thrills we have ever experienced. You almost have to have seen the way he picked up a sluggish Michigan team and fired them to the heights to believe it. Yessir, fans, we want to repeat that Dick Thornley was All-American today. . . .”

Steve Foster stood there, dripping from his shower bath. He smiled at Dick.

“Rose Bowl All-American,” Steve said. “I subscribe to that.” Then in a tone so low that only Dick would hear: “And you’re All-American in your own private battle; Dick. I’m proud of you.”

A voice behind Steve said, “Hah! Times two on that, Thornley!” Bart Jensen stuck out his hand and Dick gripped it. “You weren’t kiddin’ ’bout there being some changes made,” Jensen said. He grinned. “*Permanent* changes, too,” he said.

The words echoed and re-echoed in Dick’s mind.

Permanent changes. Rose Bowl All-American.

He felt wonderful.

